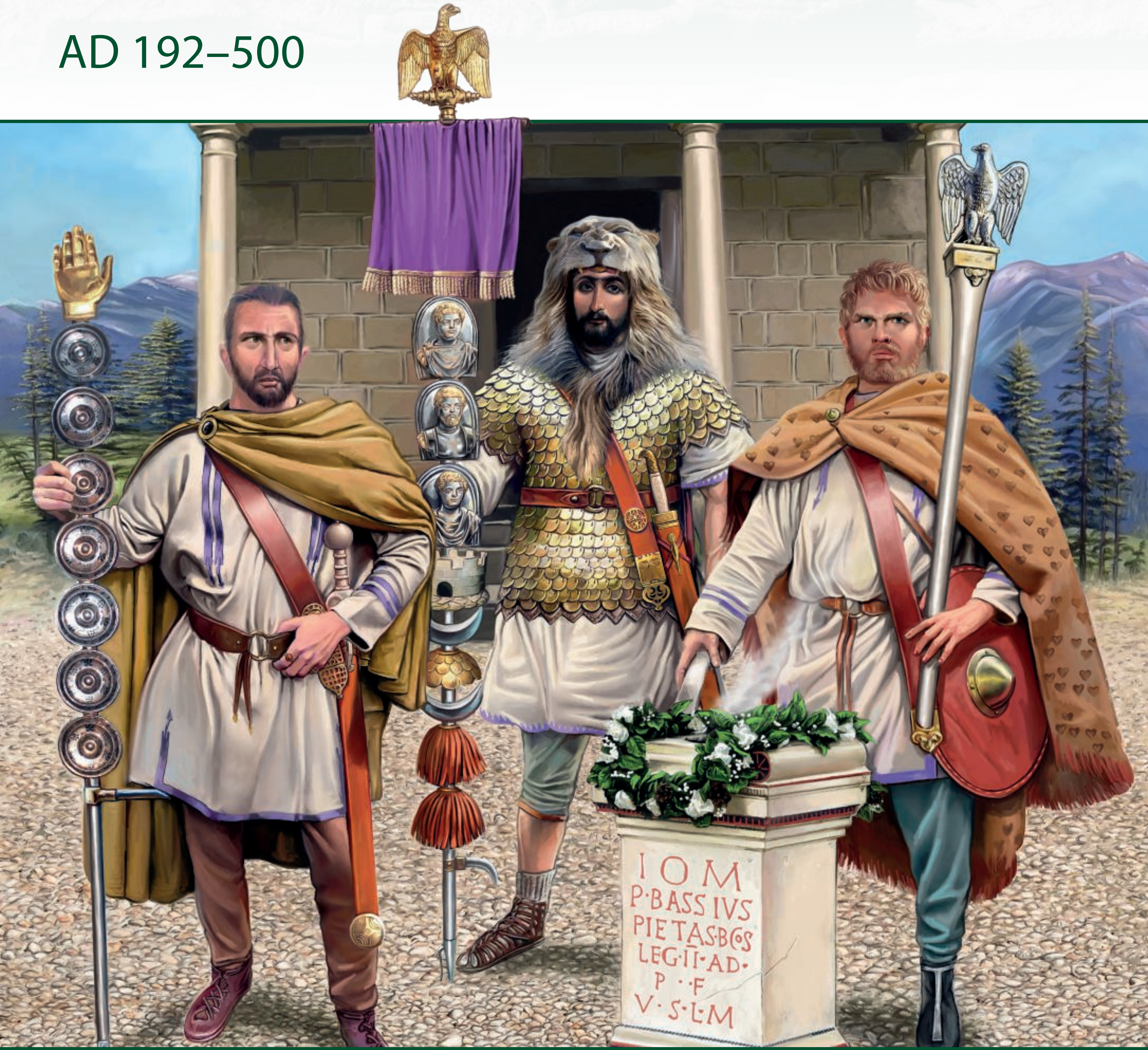
Roman Standards & Standard-Bearers (2)

AD 192–500


IOM
P·BASSIVS
PIETAS·B·COS
LEG·II·AD·
P·F
V·S·L·M

RAFFAELE D'AMATO

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREY NEGIN

Elite • 230

Roman Standards & Standard–Bearers (2)

AD 192–500

RAFFAELE D'AMATO

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREY NEGIN

Series editor Martin Windrow

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

Evolution of the cult of the standards ▪ Sources for research

STANDARDS IN THE LATE ROMAN ARMY 8

The *aquila* ▪ The *imago* ▪ The *vexillum* ▪ The *labarum* ▪ Staffs of *vexilla* and *labara* ▪ Spearheads

Standards of *cohortes* and *centuriae* ▪ The *draco* ▪ The *flamoulon*

Standards of *auxilia* and *limitanei* ▪ Cavalry standards

Other standards: *signa templorum – simulacra – skeptrà – iubae – insignia triumphi* – insignia of *beneficiarii*?

Signa Imperii: Imperial standards and the *Hasta Summa Imperii* ▪ The Imperial *labarum*

Imperial Guard standards

STANDARD-BEARERS 45

Organization and ranks ▪ *Urbaniciani* and V*igiles*

Duties and career ▪ Clothing and armour ▪ Weapons ▪ The chapel of the standards

Tactical employment of standards on the battlefield

BIBLIOGRAPHY 58

INDEX 64

ROMAN STANDARDS & STANDARD-BEARERS (2)

AD 192–500

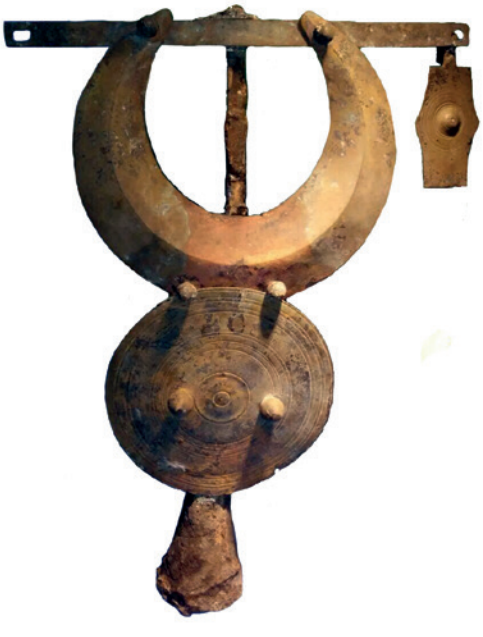
INTRODUCTION

Evolution of the cult of the standards

Until the late 5th century AD Roman military *signa* or standards remained recognizably linked to the classic military traditions of the Early Empire – albeit with some foreign introductions, and, from the second decade of the 4th century, with new Christian motifs adopted during the reign of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337).[1]

As before, they both fulfilled a tactical role on the battlefield, and were the revered symbols of the unit, the legion, and Rome itself. They had always been the objects of a cult, and in this later period they assumed even more sacred significance. They were simultaneously a tangible sign of the Divine presence with the army, and an expression of Imperial power. Some of the *signa militaria* in each unit served as a physical substitute for the presence of the emperor himself, and as a day-to-day reminder to the troops of their duty faithfully to serve his cause. This, as argued by Hebblewhite, was particularly pronounced in the turbulent period AD 235–395, during which the Roman Army demanded that the emperor should be, above all else, an effective military leader. Throughout the 3rd century the standards retained their inherently sacred status, although latterly, as suggested by Domaszevski, this was gradually overlaid by the Imperial cult.

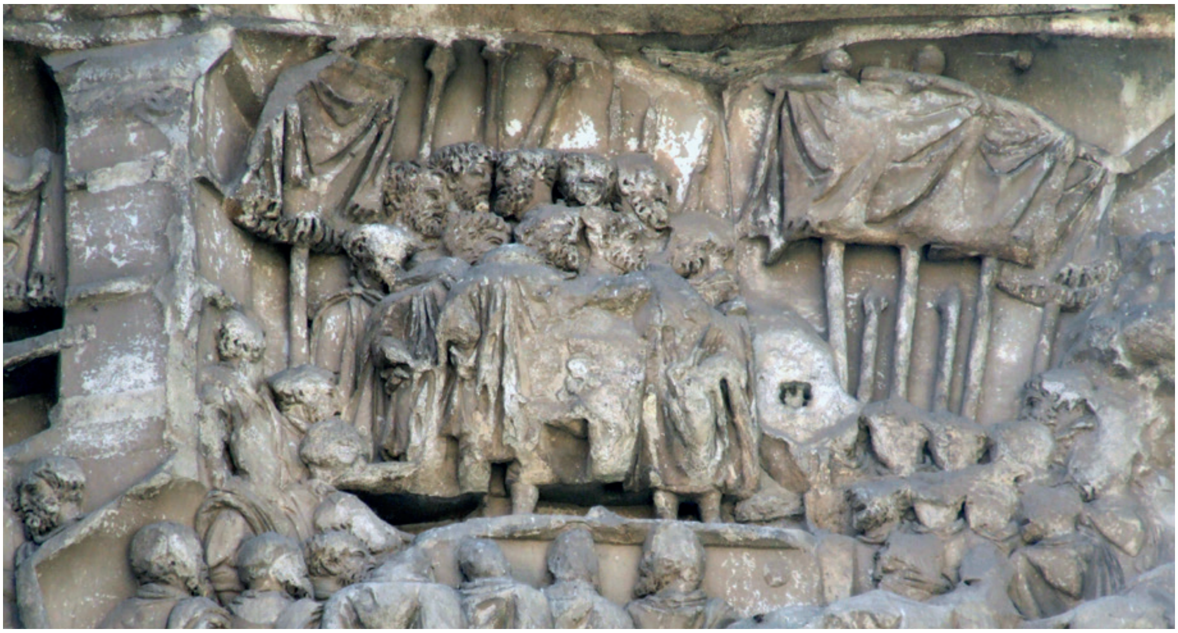
We have many mentions of the practice of the cult of the *signa* in the dedication of altars to the standards. For instance, in AD 224 M. Aurelius Iustus, chief centurion of Legio I Italica Severiana at Novae (Moesia Inferior), dedicated a limestone altar to the '*dii militares*, *genius, virtus, aquila sancta, signa*' ('The military gods, the soul [of the unit], [its] manhood, the sacred eagle, [and the] standards.') According to the Bulgarian scholar B. Gerov this altar was dedicated on



Bronze maritime *signum*, 2nd–3rd century AD, from a merchant shipwreck off Trieste. Although recovered from a civilian find site (the ship was carrying glassware), this well-preserved archaeological specimen does show features very reminiscent of military standards: the *lunula* crescent moon, the disc-shaped *phalera,* and, hanging from the crossbar, a hexagonal miniature shield pendant. (Civico Museo del Mare, Trieste, Metropolitan area of Venezia and Belluno, Padua & Treviso Provinces; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

---

[1] The son of the Tetrarch Constantius Chlorus (see Plate D commentary), Constantine campaigned in the East as a tribune under the emperors Diocletian and Galerius. He was acclaimed emperor at York by the troops in Britain on his father's death. However, civil wars against Maxentius and Licinius prevented him securing sole rule until AD 324.



Vexilla around the emperor: scene of *adlocutio* from the Arch of Septimius Severus, AD 202–203. The upper part of a relief depicting the capture of Ctesiphon during Severus's Parthian campaign a few years previously, this shows the emperor at left centre, with one flag to the left and four to the right. Damage prevents us making out any details of the *vexillarii,* some of whom should be part of the command group and the others associated with the surrounding troops. Each *vexillum* shows a fringed cloth and an approximate semi-circle or disc at the top of the staff. (*in situ,* Rome; author's photo)

20 September 224, the legion's 'birthday' *(dies natalis legionis)*. However, in the same Severan period standard-bearers are also found dedicating altars to other gods; e.g., also at Novae, the *signifer* L. Cultius raised one to an unknown deity (his legion is not specified, but was almost certainly Legio I Italica again). At High Rochester (Britannia), an altar was erected between AD 238 and 244 with a dedication to the '*signa Cohors I Vardullorum*' and '*genius domini nostri*' by Egnatius Lucilianus, *legatus pro-praetor* for Cohors I Vardullorum and the scouts of the Numerus Exploratorum Brem(enensium), under command of the tribune Cassius Sabinianus (*RIB, I,* 1262).

The alien image of the dragon became an object of veneration when it took the form of the *dracones* standards carried by some units from the 2nd century and much more widely thereafter (see below, 'The *draco*'). We lack the evidence to trace in detail evolving differences in the cult worship of individual types of standards; but of the *dracones,* we might hypothetically suggest that sacred properties resided not only in their embodiment of unit identity, but also in their intimidating impact on the enemy, as the wind hissed through their metal jaws and their 'windsock' bodies writhed in the air.

With the adoption of Christianity, military flags assumed an increasingly important sacred function as icons of the new religion. From the reign of Constantine the Great, the presence of *labara* bearing the Christian monogram (*chi-rhô*) was believed to have the power to revive the courage of soldiers who might be faltering in battle, and even to render its bearer invulnerable. Its sacred power was even recognized by superstitious enemies: Eusebius (*Vita Cons*., II, 16) writes that Constantine's opponent Licinius forbade his soldiers to look at it. 'Having learned by experience the divine and mysterious power which resided in the [flag], by means of which Constantine's army had become accustomed to victory, [Licinius] admonished his soldiers never to direct their attack against this standard, nor even incautiously to allow their eyes to rest upon it, assuring them that it possessed a terrible power, and was especially hostile to him, so that they would do well to carefully avoid any contact with it.' The psychological importance of standards in the Late

Roman period is also attested, for example, by a reference from Ammianus Marcellinus to a standard lost in Persia which was recovered in AD 363. In Ammianus (*Hist.*, XXIX, 5,15) the *signa militaria* are mentioned in specific connection with priestly crowns (*coronae sacerdotales*).

It is illuminating that among the anti-Christian measures taken by the Emperor Julian 'the Apostate' (r. 361–363) was the removal of Christian imagery from the standards of Roman legions; Christ's cross and monogram were temporarily replaced with symbols of the Sun and of the old Roman traditions. When the Christian standards were restored they provided a redoubled inspiration for the army: as symbols of the faith, and of God's legitimisation of the new regime. A passage of St Ambrose (*Amb. Ep.*72a and *de Fide.* 2.16.141–2), addressed to the Emperor Gratian (r. 367–383), may be interpreted as saying that although the eagles still led the army physically, it was now faith in Christ that was the army's greatest strength: 'Turn again, O Lord, and set up the banners of Thy faith. No military eagles, no flight of birds, here lead the van of our army, but Thy Name, Lord Jesus, and Thy worship' ('*Convertere, Domine, fideique tuae adtolle vexilla. Non hic aquilae militares, neque volatus avium exercitum ducunt, sed tuum, Domine Jesu, nomen et cultus*').

Sources for research

As for the Early Imperial period, the study and reconstruction of standards of the 3rd–5th centuries AD is mainly based on the iconography of monuments, on details of coins, and on the few surviving archaeological fragments. Unfortunately, given the perishable nature of the materials employed, only a few pieces of Late Roman standards have survived, although in recent years the remains of some exceptional artefacts, such as the Palatine and Aventine finds in Rome, have shed new light on the topic. Sometimes the archaeology linked to the abandonment of a military site helps us with dating, as in the case of the rare fragments found at Niederbieber, left by the Romans in AD 259–260. Inevitably, however, our reconstructions rest mainly on conjectural comparisons between literary and iconographical evidence. Such research is made even more difficult by the state of publication regarding some archaeological finds which might be interpreted as relating to *signa*

A

THE SEVERAN PERIOD, 3rd CENTURY AD

(1) Praetorian *signifer*; Rome, AD 203–204

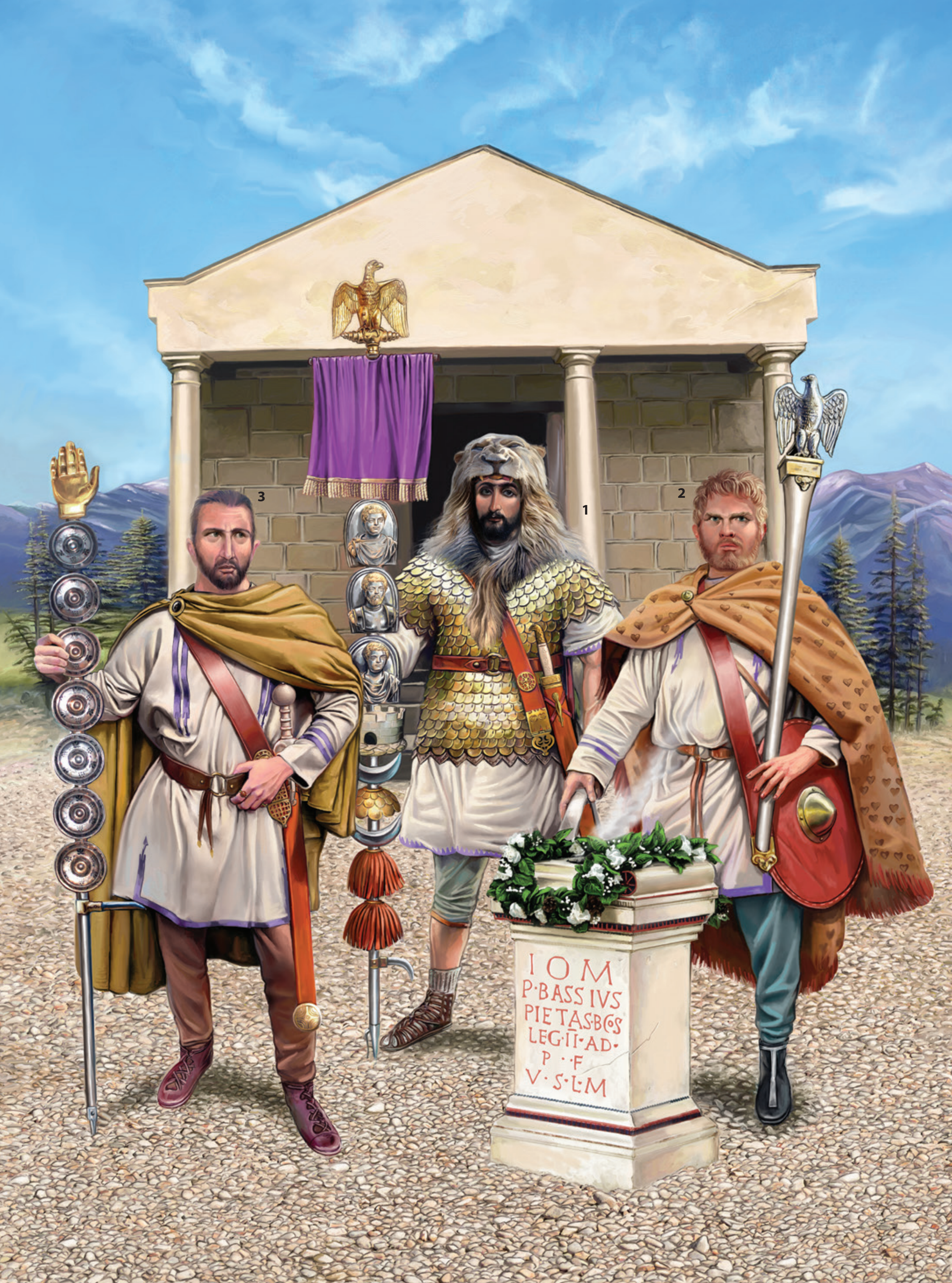
This Guardsman carries one of the three *signa* depicted on the Arch of the Argentarii, with the image of Geta restored so that it displays those of Septimius Severus between both his sons. Surmounted by an eagle and a *vexillum*, the *signum* also displays a *corona muralis*, and *lunulae* alternating with actual and scaled metal tassels (*tufae*). It probable served as a combination of *vexillum cohortis* and *imago cohortis* for all the Praetorian cohorts. The bearer is wearing the usual Praetorian standard-bearer's distinction of a lion's pelt over a *squama*, the scale armour in use by the Praetorian Guard throughout the 3rd century AD.

(2) Titus Flavius Surillio, *aquilifer* of *Legio II Adiutrix Pia Fidelis*; Byzantium, AD 214

For a photo of this eagle-bearer's funerary stele see page 8. Standing by an altar dedicated by a centurion of his legion, he wears a short, long-sleeved *tunica militaris* woven or embroidered with blue-purple *clavi*, *bracae* trousers, closed *calcei* boots, and a *sagum* cloak. Note the hint of a 'sceptre' design in the pedestal on which the *aquila legionis* sits. The short-staffed standard is supported by a carrying-sling fitted with a decorated socket. The dimensions of the shield fit well with those of the standard-bearers' shields shown in the iconography of pervious centuries, worn underarm or slung on the left side of the body.

(3) Alexandrus, *signifer* of *Cohors II hastati prioris*, *Legio II Trajana Fortis Germanica*; Nicopolis, *c.* AD 200–225

This *signum cohortis* is surmounted by a hand, and displays on the staff seven *phalerae* of *patera* or 'saucer' shape, slightly varying in size. Note the bearer's typical ring-buckled belt of the period, worn together with a baldric that supports the *spatha* sword on the left side of the body. The colour and decorative *loroi* of his tunic are copied from comtemporary military portraits from Luxor and original tunics..


3
1
2
I O M
P·BASS IVS
PIE TAS·B·COS
LEG·II·AD·
P··F
V·S·L·M

militaria. The indications for such an attribution are usually rather weak and provisional, often based only on study of these various spearheads, small portrait images or pole attachments in comparison with the iconography. The recent work of Dr K. M. Töpfer has been invaluable, but much work remains to be done.

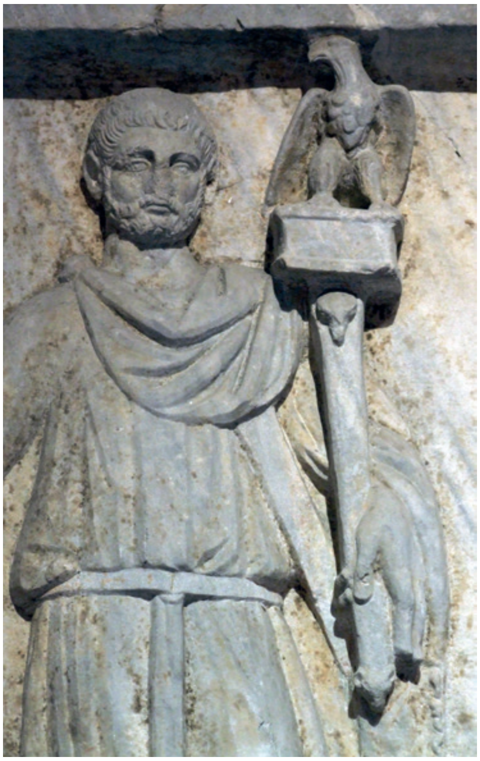
STANDARDS IN THE LATE ROMAN ARMY

The triumphal procession of the Emperor Gallienus (r. 258–268) in the Roman Forum in AD 263, described in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (SHA, *Gall.,* VIII, 6), give us an idea of the splendour of the passage of military standards, as well as important terms of denomination:

'…On each side of him were borne 500 gilded spears *(hastae auratae)* and 100 banners *(vexilla),* besides those which belonged to the corporations, and the military flags *(dracones)* and the statues from the sanctuaries *(signa templorum),* and the standards of all the legions *(signa legionum)*…'

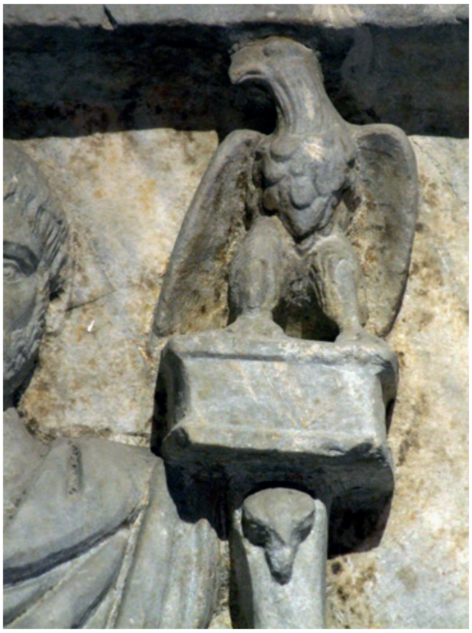
The traditional Roman *signa* (SHA, *Al. Sev*., LIV, 6) or *semeia* (SHA, *Sev*., VII, 1; Herodian, *Rom. Hist*., IV, 7, 7) were employed throughout the 3rd century AD, often bearing the image and name of the emperor, as were the *vexilla* (SHA, *Ant. Diad*., III, 1). Alongside these, the use of new kinds of standards began to be seen. The *hastae auratae* might be a reference to the staffs of the standards being covered with gold, but we cannot exclude that we have here the first mention of the *signa* called *skeptrà* by Eastern Romans of the Byzantine period, featuring the personification of Winged Victory (the goddess Nike). Equally, the reference might simply be to a spearhead in gilded iron, like specimens recently found in Rome. Ancient authors describe military standards as gleaming or shining (Ammianus, *Hist.,* XXIX, 5, 15: 'dazzled by the gleaming standards' *(fulgore signorum);* XXX, 3, 5: 'brilliance of flashing standards'), and often as having the staff decorated with precious stones.

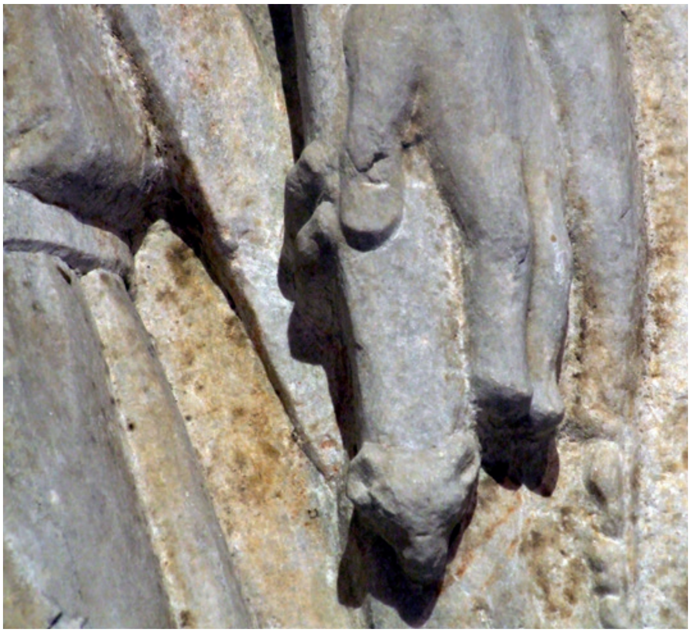
Detail from funerary stele of Titus Flavius Surillio, *aquilifer* of *Legio II Adiutrix Pia Fidelis*, AD 214, from Byzantium; see reconstruction as Plate A2. An important detail is the carrying strap worn from his right shoulder to his left thigh, supporting the short-shafted standard. (Istanbul Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



The *aquila*

The *aquila* (eagle), as a symbol mounted at the top of a staff, survived well into the 5th century, and continued in the East for at least another 200 years thereafter. According to Flavius Renatus Vegetius, writing in the late 4th century, 'The chief standard of the entire legion is the eagle, carried by the eagle-bearer (a*quilifer*)'. That the eagle was still the *primum signum* of each legion at the end of that century may be inferred from a law promulgated by the co-emperors Arcadius and Honorius in AD 396, threatening severe punishment for any who harboured deserters (Cth 7.18. 9): '*Et quoniam plurimos cognovimus, priusquam victricibus aquilis sociarentur, vel illuc, unde electi fuerant…*' ('Since we have learned that before they have become associated with our victorious eagles, many recruits flee…'). An important mention is reported by P. C. Guizot in a little-known mid-5th century source, a life of St Anian; this describes the legions of Aetius arriving to rescue Orleans from a siege by the Huns in AD 451 ('Suddenly a shout re-echoed





through the streets: it was Aetius, Theodoric, and Torismund his son, who were coming with the eagles of the Roman legions and with the banners of the Visigoths').

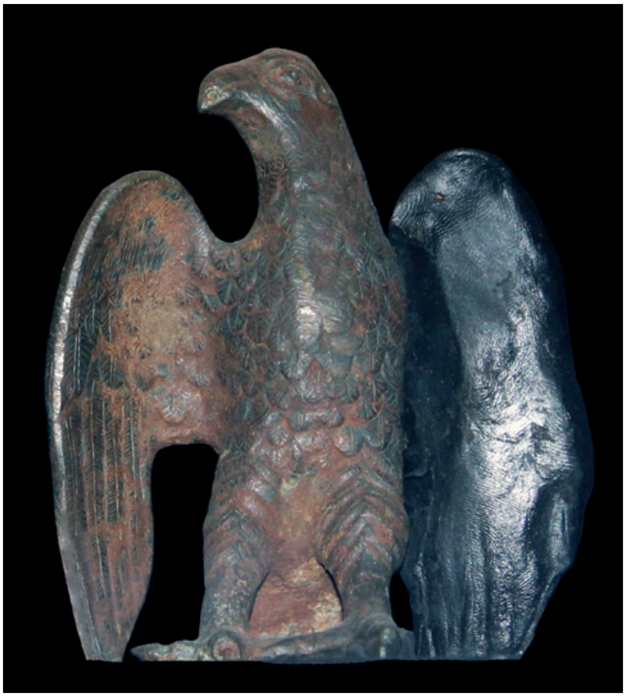
The design of the eagle standard seems to have changed during the 3rd century. The stele of Titus Flavius Surillio in Istanbul Museum shows a very interesting example mounted on a short shaft with a carrying harness, and animal-heads represented high and low on the staff (see photos on this page). The Surillio eagle does not show the wings spread, but folded at the sides. From comparison with an average human height, that of the eagle seems to be roughly 30cm (11.8 inches). This corresponds with the size of a possible legionary eagle preserved in the Glass Museum at Gaziantep (ancient Edessa) in Turkey, whose shape is identical to the Surillio example. Another damaged eagle in the same museum, retaining part of its silver plating, is of larger dimensions; its shape recalls the iconography of the sarcophagus from Szentendre, Hungary, of one Aurelius (possibly Aurelius Firmanus?), an early 3rd-century a*quilifer* of Legio II Adiutrix.

Töpfer raises a possible problem concerning the representation of the a*quilae* on the Surillio and Aurelius (Firmanus?) monuments. Both refer to *aquiliferi* of Legio II Adiutrix, and both are dated to *circa* AD 210–220. Logically, therefore, they should each show the same standard; but while the Surillio staff is decorated, that of Aurelius is not. Possible explanations include the progressive decoration of the staff over a few years; the use of decorated and plain staffs for ceremonial occasions and for battle; and also simply the bad condition of the depiction on the Szentendre sarcophagus. There is another problem, however, with the shape of the eagles; while both representations are similar, that on the Surillio monument has the head turned to the right, and that on the Szentendre sarcophagus is turned to the left.

In all, these funerary monuments mention three eagle-bearers from Legio II Adiutrix in the six years 214–220: Titus Flavius Surillio (died 214); Aurelius Zanax (the comrade who dedicated the stele to Surillio); and

ABOVE LEFT
Detail of the *aquila* from Surillio's gravestone. The small animal head just below the eagle's pedestal is suggested by Speidel as an 'heraldic' animal symbol of *Legio II Adiutrix,* but though now unidentifiable it does not resemble either the boar or the Pegasus that are recorded as that legion's *genii.* (Istanbul Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

ABOVE RIGHT
Surillio's left hand is shown resting against the bottom of the carrying-harness, where a downwards-facing ram's head is convincingly identified by Töpfer as either a socket on the harness or a decorative ferrule at the end of the shaft. (Istanbul Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Aquila, silver-plated bronze, from Gaziantep, Turkey (ancient Edessa), mid-3rd century AD. The down-folded wings and head turned to the right recall the standard on Surillio's funerary monument. (Glass Museum, Gaziantep; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Aurelius (Firmanus?), who died at some date between 213 and 220. It is difficult to believe that a legionary eagle could have changed its shape in such a short period; and while a restoration following battle-damage is possible, since at least two of the bearers were killed in action, there is another possibility.

During these years *vexillationes* (detachments) of Legio II Adiutrix were deployed on different fronts, and each might have carried its own *aquila*. If Aurelius Firmanus (?), killed in Germania – probably during Caracalla's campaign against the Alemanni in 214 – had his *aquila* with him, then at least one other legionary eagle should have remained with the main body of the legion at Aquincum (modern Budapest). Surillio, buried in Asia Minor, probably served with a *vexillatio* deployed against the Parthians in 217. If the body of the legion at Aquincum kept its main standard, this would explain why the eagle of Legio II Adiutrix on coins of Severus minted in AD 193 is different from both the other two, showing a longer staff and open-spread wings. The detail on Surillio's monument seems too precise to be mere artistic convention employed to identify him as an eagle-bearer. Both the specimens on funerary monuments seem to be early examples of *skeptrà*, with the eagles mounted upon a staff and pedestal imitating the ivory sceptres of consular rank – perhaps given to the *signiferi* of *vexillationes* who held the rank of *aquilifer*?

An important late specimen of legionary eagle was found in Egypt, at the Babylon fortress in Cairo. This bronze example, dated to the 4th or 5th century, is also confirmed by the miniatures in the *Notitia Dignitatum:* those

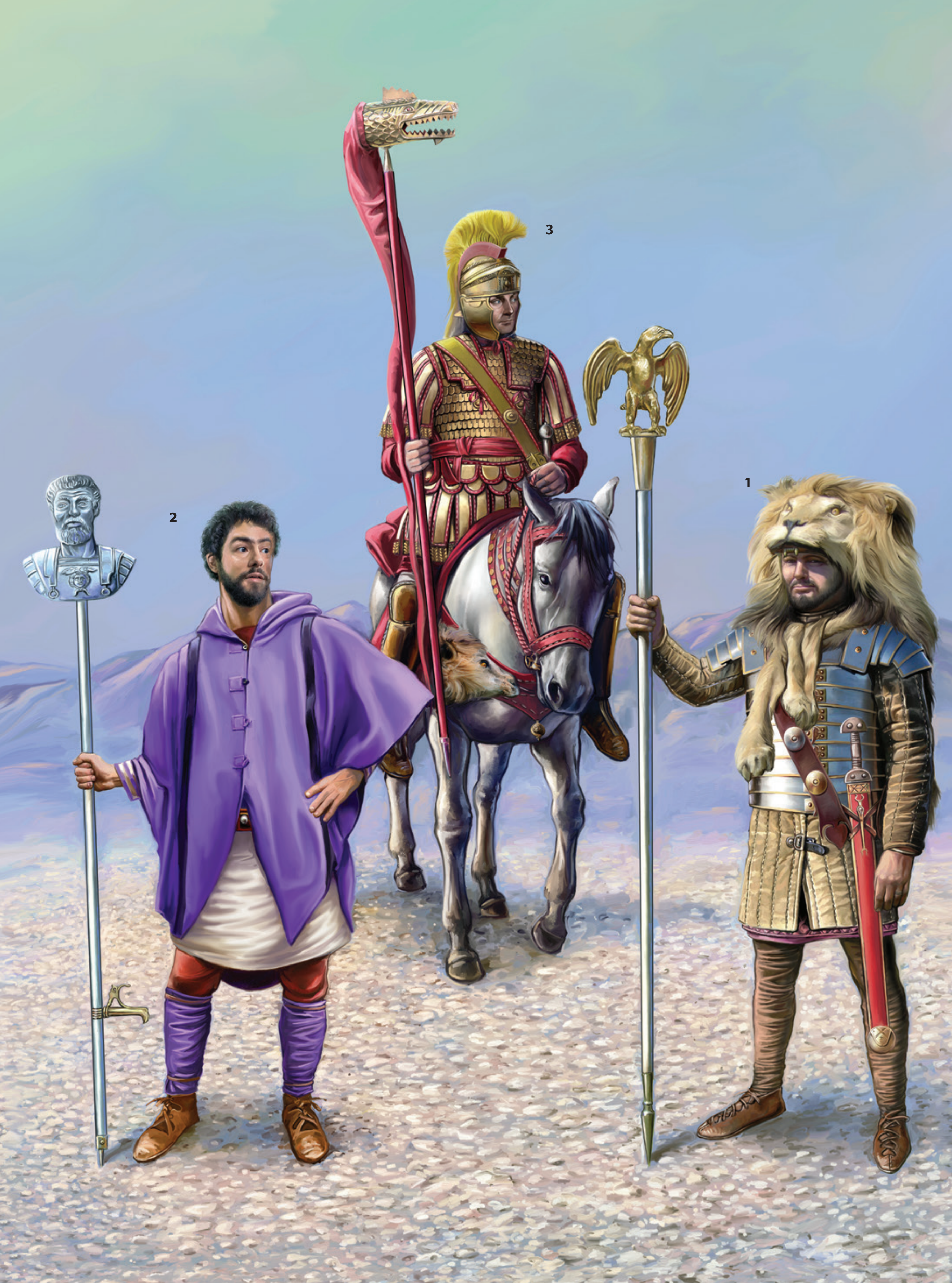
B

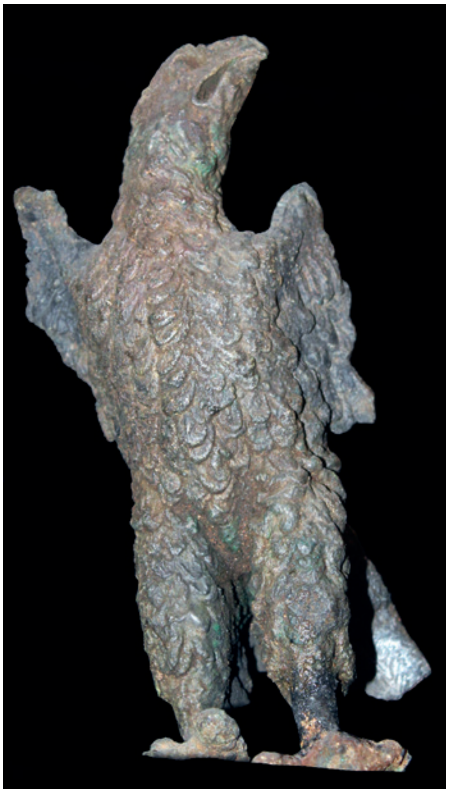
MILITARY ANARCHY, 3rd CENTURY AD

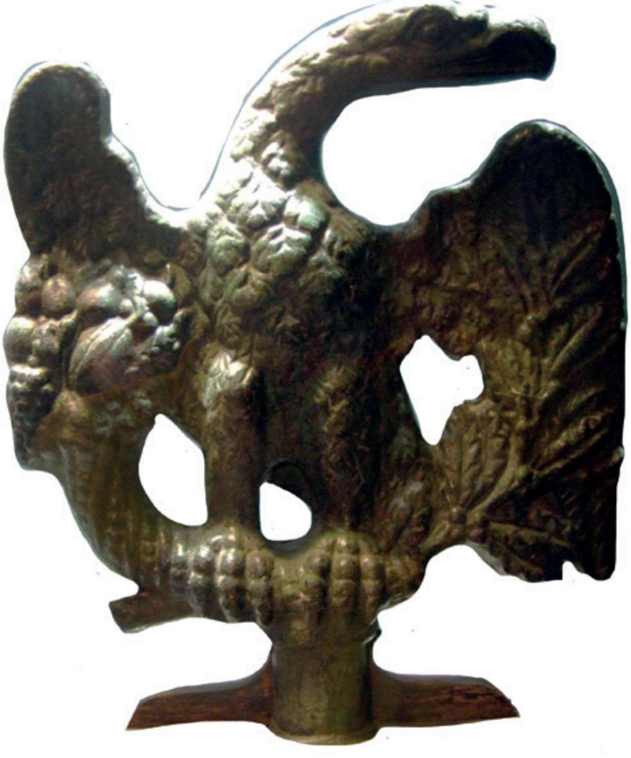
(1) *Aquilifer* probably of *Legio IIII Italica*, AD 236–238
The 'barbarian' aspect of this Pannonian legionary may explain the fears of the Italian population at the time of the arrival of the legions of the Emperor Maximinus 'the Thracian'. He is wearing a banded armour of Sarmatian type over a *subarmalis* and a padded *cento*, anticipating the *gambeson* of the Middle Ages. Note his wide lion skin knotted on the breast, and the particular shape of his eagle, perhaps a local Pannonian production when this legion was formed by Severus Alexander in AD 231. (A broad analysis of Roman military costume during this chaotic period will be found in the present author's Men-at-Arms 527, *Roman Army Units in the Western Provinces (2): 3rd Century AD*.)

(2) Aurelius Diogenes, *imaginifer* of *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*; Deva, Britannia, *c.* AD 265
Although the top of his funerary stele is broken off, the heavy *paenula* cloak is clearly visible. We reconstruct him wearing *tibiales* wrapped around his legs, and closed *calcei* as found in Britain. The *imago* he carries is copied from a possible contemporary portrait of Postumus, who ruled Britannia as part of his Gallic Empire in AD 260–269.

(3) *Draconarius* of Praetorian Guard or *Eques Singulares*; battle of Abryttus, AD 251
This Imperial dragon-bearer, copied from the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, perhaps served during Decius's campaign against the Goths. He wears a pseudo-Attic helmet furnished with fronton and crest, and a *squama* armour; note the superior quality of his horse-harness. The head of his *draco* is taken directly from the near-contemporary specimen found at Niederbieber.


3
2
1





ABOVE LEFT
Another, but damaged, mid-3rd century bronze *aquila* from Edessa. In this specimen the head is turned to the left and upwards, and the shape of the missing wings is unclear. (Glass Museum, Gaziantep; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

ABOVE RIGHT
A very differently shaped *aquila* of the 5th century AD, recovered from the fortress of Babylon in present-day Cairo, Egypt. (Coptic Museum, Cairo; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

referring to Egyptian cities with legionary garrisons do not show *vexilla*, but eagles. Thus the pagan eagle would continue to preside over the legions of Christian Rome until the end of the Empire.

The *imago*

Vegetius notes (II, 6–7) that in the legions the *imaginiferi* carried the Imperial *imagines*. The function of the *imago* or portrait was to symbolize to the troops the constant presence of the emperor, in a blatant attempt by emperors to co-opt to themselves the inherently sacred character of the *signa militaria*. The evidence, including both archaeological specimens and related iconography, suggests that the Imperial *imago* continued to be widely carried throughout the army in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

The *imago* held by Aurelius Diogenes on his funerary stele from Chester (Britannia) shows near the bottom a curved handle apparently located behind the shaft. At the top, the shaft ends in a crossbar to which a bust is attached. The face of the *imago* is too badly damaged for any attempt to identify the emperor. (Incidentally, the popularity among these soldiers of the personal name Aurelius, copied from a prestigious Imperial dynasty, is quite usual.)

The archaeology of the 3rd–early 4th centuries is rich in silver-plated portraits once mounted upon such standards. They include those of Gallienus (?, Musée de la Fourvière, Lyon); Licinius (Archäologische Staatsammlung Dauerleihgabe der HBV Group, München); one from Szony/Brigetio (Budapest National Museum); and two portraits of Tetrarchs from Turkey. A still-intact gold image of Septimius Severus, from Dydimoteichon, measures 25cm (9.8 in) high, which is a usual size.

Two Imperial busts in Vienna are much smaller (10cm/3.9 in), but this does not exclude their employment as *imagines*. Usually the busts show emperors, either clean-shaven or bearded, wearing muscled or scale armour (sometimes decorated with a central *gorgoneion*) and a *paludamentum* cloak, sometimes fringed, fastened at the right shoulder by a round *fibula* brooch.

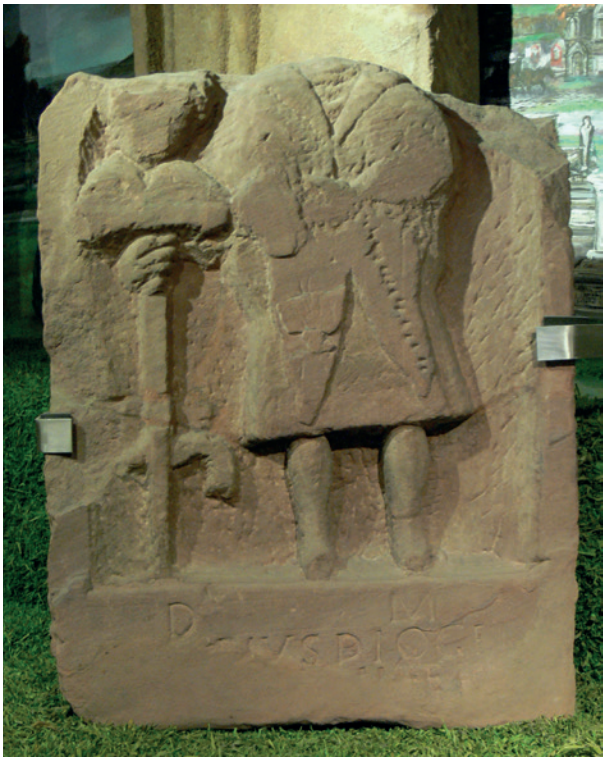
Imperial *imagines* might also be embroidered on *vexilla* banners. A clear example comes from Ammianus (*Hist., XV*, 5, 15), who says that Silvanus signalled his usurpation against Constantius II and his rise '*ad culmen imperiale*' by tearing the cloth *vexilla* off the *signa militaria*. Such a gesture only makes sense if he was destroying his rival's image, and this interpretation corresponds to the iconography of Imperial standards.[2]

The *vexillum*

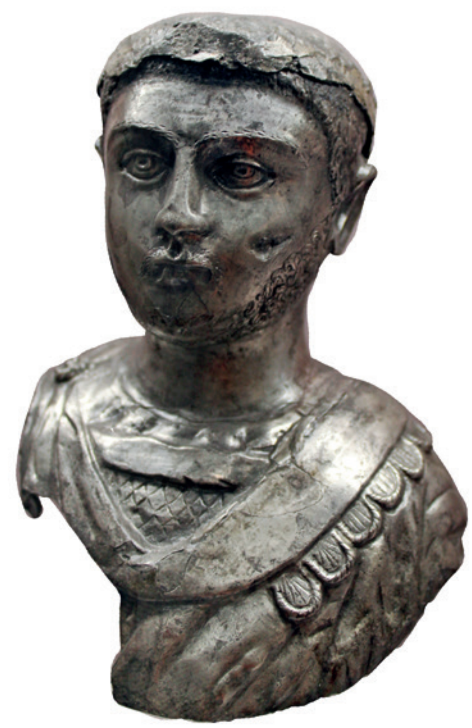
As before, the *vexillum* consisted of a squared piece of cloth, in purple (SHA, *Gord*., VIII, 4) or red material, hung from a crossbar attached to a spear. The red colour is recorded by Macrobius in the early 5th century (*Saturnalia*, I, 16, 15): '...as for battle days... namely, the thirty consecutive days during which, after orders to the army to muster, a red flag (*vexillum russi coloris*) is placed on the citadel...'). The *vexilla* were fringed at the bottom edge, often

---

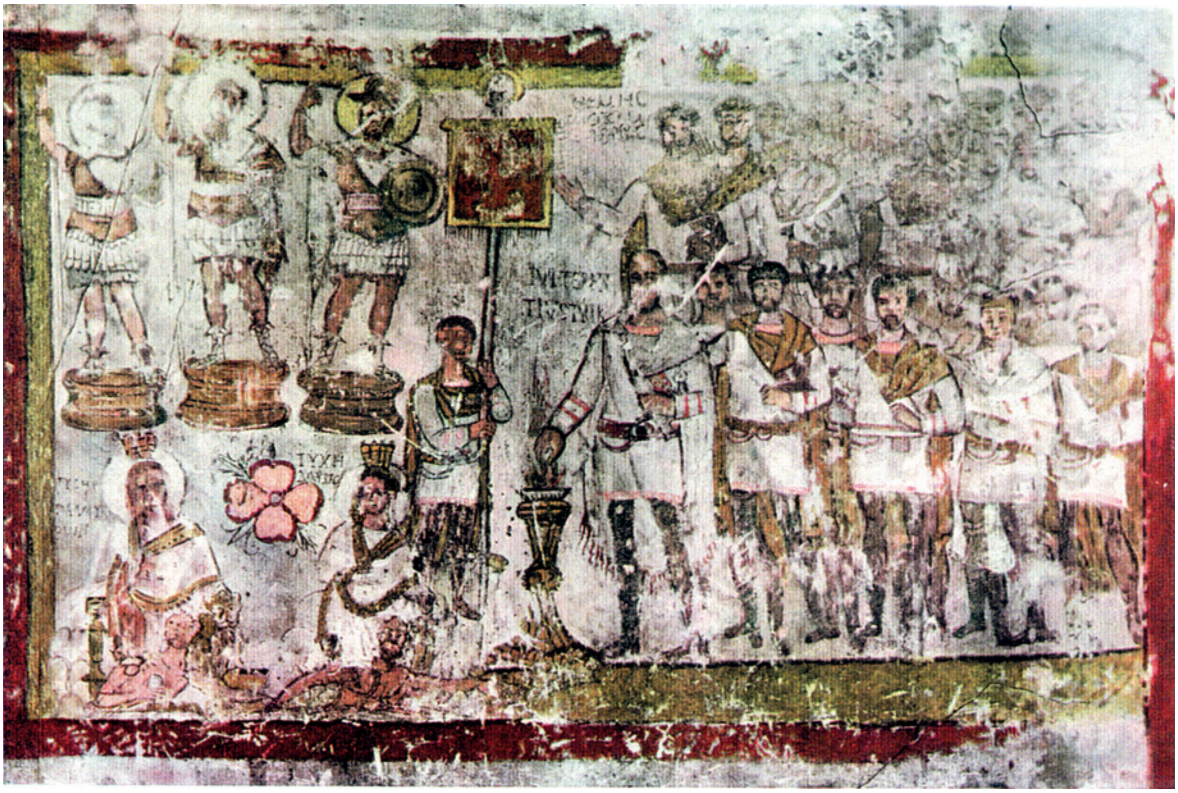
[2] On the death of Constantine I 'the Great' in AD 337, the Empire was divided between his three surviving sons, which led to violent rivalry. Constantine II ruled in the West (until killed while invading Italy in 340); Constantius II in the East; and Constans I in Italy and Africa (until assassinated in 350). Constantius II then ruled alone until his natural death in AD 361, when he was succeeded by Julian 'the Apostate'. Despite reigns troubled by their rivalries and by other would-be usurpers, all three of Constantine the Great's sons also campaigned successfully against Rome's external enemies.



BELOW LEFT
Funerary stele of the *imaginifer* Aurelius Diogenes, from Deva (modern Chester, England) – the headquarters of *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*. See reconstruction as Plate B2; the now-headless carving shows a *paenula* cloak of what scholars call the 'Caracalla' type, after a literary reference to that emperor. (Chester Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



BELOW RIGHT
Silver *imago* of an emperor, perhaps Gallienus; second half of 3rd century AD, from Lugdunum (modern Lyon, France). He is conventionally portrayed wearing scale armour, and a cloak fastened at his right shoulder. (Musée Archéologique de la Fourvière, Lyon; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



The 'Terentius painting' from the temple of Bel, Dura Europos, mid-3rd century AD. The painting was already damaged when it was discovered in 1920, and – although it has some inaccuracies, and lacks some uniform details – this watercolour copy made in Paris by Cumont is the best preserved version. It shows Julius Terentius, the tribune commanding *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum,* making a sacrifice to his gods in the presence of some of his troops; at left centre, note the *vexillarius* carrying a flag embroidered or painted with the image of a deity, edged with gold on three sides and fringed at the end. (After Cumont, 1926)

with heavy gold thread (Amm. Marc, *Hist.*, XVI, 10: 'v*exilla auro rigentia*'). They were usually decorated with depictions of either the eagle, Jupiter, or Victory, which were replaced in Christian times with the 'Chrismon' – the *chi-rhô* monogram.

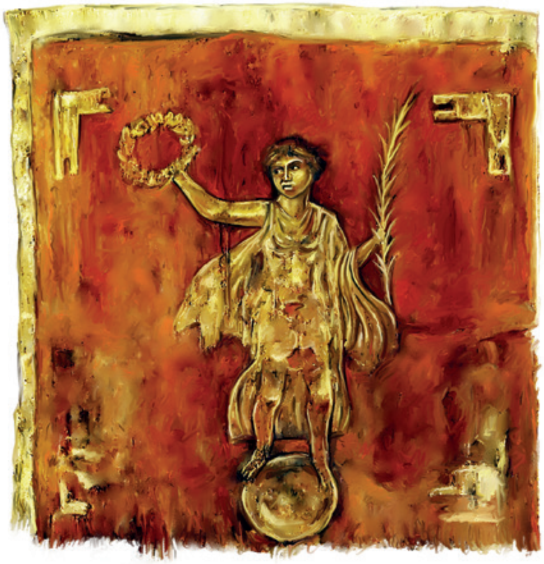
The exceptional climate of Egypt has preserved almost intact a coarse linen *vexillum*, dated to the turn of the 2nd/3rd centuries AD, and published by Rostovtzeff in 1913 and 1942 (see opposite). It is a roughly squared cloth, measuring 50cm wide by 47cm high (19.7 x 18.5 in). It retains a transverse rod of reed 50cm long in a 'tunnel' across the top, so must have been suspended from the top of a vertical staff. The right and left edges of the cloth are selvedged and the lower edge decorated with a fringe. Remarkably, it retains its bright red colour and its decoration. This shows a central image woven in gold, of Victory standing on a globe, holding a wreath in her right hand with a medallion containing an inset stone and traces of ribbons hanging down, and a palm frond in her left hand. The goddess is represented in frontal view, with the head and eyes turned slightly to her right, as if about to crown with the wreath someone standing on that side. She is barefoot, and dressed in a *chiton* and a *chlamys*. Her image is framed by four angled motifs in the corners of the flag, also in gold – the typical ornaments called *gammadia,* from the shape of the Greek letter *gamma* (Γ).

In addition to this exceptional find, Feugère also mentions the existence of a second flag from Egypt, of coarse cloth, and decorated with a simple cruciform design based on a geometrical pattern and floral motifs. Found during excavations as long ago as the late 1980s, unfortunately it still awaits proper publication.

The *labarum*

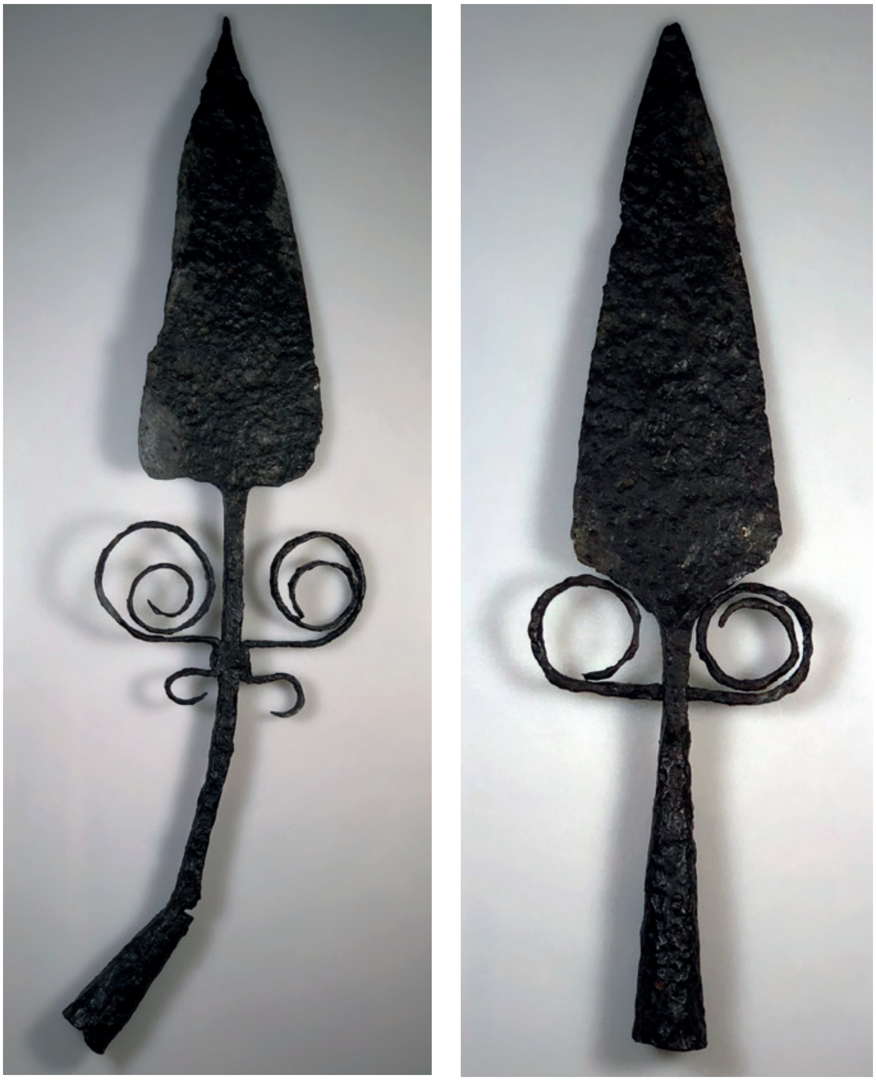
Ancient sources can be confusing in that the term *vexilla* is sometimes used specifically, and sometimes generically as a collective word for standards. The *labarum* was a squared *vexillum* hanging vertically from a crossbar and staff usually decorated with silver or gold studs. The T-shaped staff is visible on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, and on a Roman carved gladiatorial relief re-employed in the 6th-century construction of the Great Church of St John in Ephesus, on the west coast of modern Turkey. Writers of the 4th and 5th centuries still use the generic term *vexillum* (Veg., II, 1) for this type of standard. However, the name *labarum* is applied to the specific Imperial standard created by Constantine the Great in AD 312, and was later applied to *vexilla* bearing Christian symbols.

From the 4th century, beginning with the sons of Constantine, Christian symbols appeared embroidered on Roman flags. The *chi-rhô* monogram (☧), formed from the first two letters of 'Christ' in Greek (*chi* = X and *rhô* = P: Eusebius, II, 31), was used far more commonly than the simple cross or the cross-*rhô,* but sometimes they were interchangeable. *Labara* were often used in combination with staffs decorated with *phalerae* and surmounted by the Christian monogram as a finial; this is visible on many coins (e.g. a *follis* of Constantine the Great in AD 327, and the reverse of a medallion of Constans I in 347). Such flags seem have to be used mainly by Imperial Guard units, but some iconography may also indicate their employment by ordinary legions within the Imperial *comitatus* or field army.



This remarkable survival is a 3rd-century Roman *vexillum* from an unidentified site in Egypt. The linen banner is 47cm high by 50cm wide; traces of a fringe at the bottom edge survive, and the 'tunnel' on the upper edge still contained a reed crossbar. Centred on the red field is the painted deity Victory standing on a globe, holding a laurel wreath and a palm-branch. In the four corners are so-called *gamma* shapes, as also found on some surviving Late Roman clothing. (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; painting by Dr Andrey Negin)

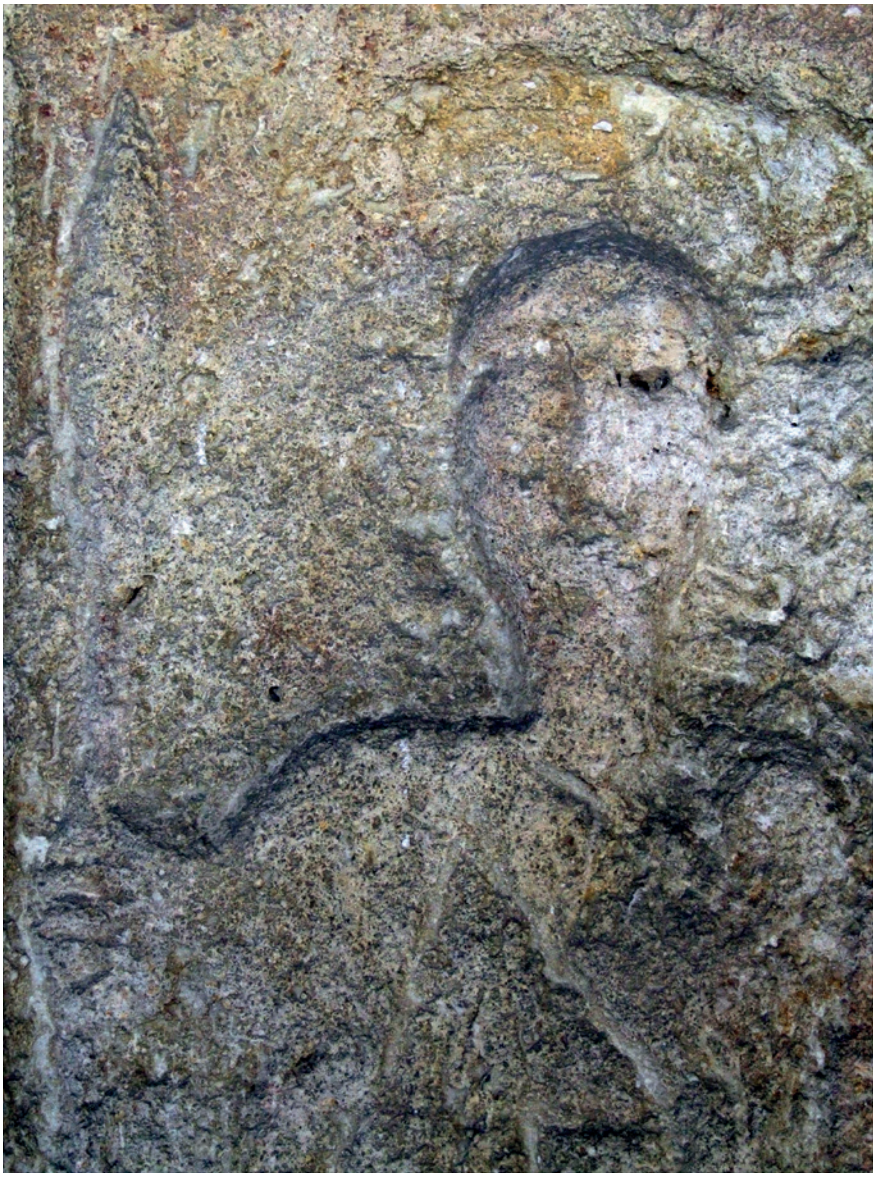
Roman infantry *vexillarii,* wearing *Spangenhelme* helmets and scale body armour, from the Arch of Galerius in Greece, AD 298. (*in situ,* Thessaloniki; photo courtesy Dr Manfred Beer)



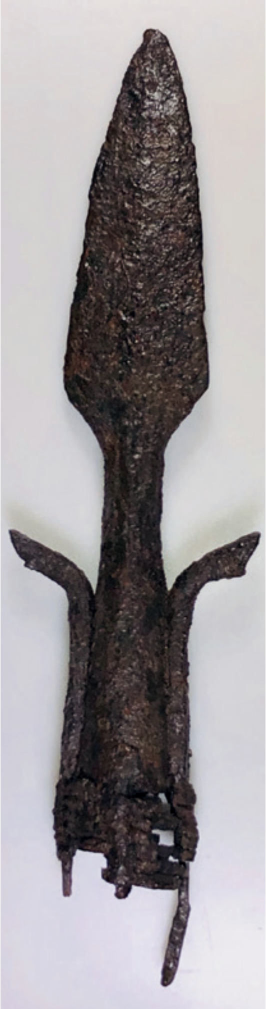
Standard spearheads, 3rd century AD; compare with reconstructions on Plate C and H3. The pair of volutes below both spear blades strongly suggest that these topped the shafts of *vexilla,* with provision for cords suspending the crossbar that supported the cloth flag; they resemble a feature on the damaged gravestone of the 3rd-century image-bearer Sammnus from Serbia. The example with both larger and smaller pairs of volutes may have been intended for dressing with decorative ribbons or tassels. (European private collection; photos courtesy Dr Fabrizio Casprini)

It is not always easy to distinguish the *labara* from simple military *vexilla*. For example, the two *protectores sacri lateris* holding flags in the scene of Constantine's *adlocutio* on his Arch carry undecorated *vexilla*, of which the colour is now lost. But Eusebius writes, expressly of the *labarum* decorated with Christian symbols, that 'The emperor constantly made use of this sign of salvation... and commanded that others similar to it should be carried at the head of all his armies'. So probably, from Constantine on, the *signa* of the legions and cavalry included *vexilla* embroidered with crosses or with the *chi-rhô*, the latter often surrounded by a wreath or palm branches. Its adoption by the troops was probably gradual and partial, however, since in the last decades of the 5th century images of simple *vexilla* are as frequent as *labara*. The iconography shows the *chi-rhô* both as embroidered on the cloth and as a rounded three-dimensional object fixed at the top of the staff, replacing the conventional spearhead or medallion.

It is hard to know if from the time of its introduction the term *labarum* (Greek, *labaron*) refers to the cloth flag or to the three-dimensional standard-top. For instance, Sozomenos writes (*HE*, IX, 4): 'Stilicho then took one of the sceptres (*skeptròn*) which the Romans call *labaron*... with which he set out, at the head of four legions, to carry on war in the East'. Apart from such specific references to a three-dimensional object, the word is probably used mostly for the *vexilla* displaying Christian symbols, but it is likely that different models of the same *signum* were used at the same time. Prudentius, in a text of AD 384 (*Contra Symmachum*, I, 464–466), mentions a standard bearing on the cloth a cross studded with precious stones, and long spears crowned by gold crosses (which Babuin interprets as probably *skeptrà*): 'Oh queen, be ready to acknowledge my standards, on which the figure of the cross leads the van, either gleaming in jewels, or fashioned of solid gold on the long spears' ('*Agnoscas, regina, libens mea signa necesse est, in quibus effigies crucis aut gemmata refulgent, Aut longis solido ex auro praefertur in hastis*').



Detail of the stele of the *imaginarius* Sammnus from ancient Sirmium, Serbia, where he served as the bearer of an Imperial image in *Legio VIII Augusta*. The monument was dedicated to him by his wife, Verina, in about AD 240; it is badly deteriorated, but under magnification it seems to show him holding a spear with volutes suggesting a standard head in his right hand, and possibly the *imago* and/or a small round shield to his left. (Sremska Mitrovica Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Spearhead from a *vexillum*, Balkans, early 4th century AD. (European private collection; photo courtesy Dr Fabrizio Casprini)

Staffs of *vexilla* and *labara*

Recent excavations on the Aventine Hill in Rome have shed light on the construction of such standards in Late Antiquity. Among the finds from the Via del Tempio di Diana, dating from the sack of the city by Alaric's Goths in AD 410, the Italian archaeologists Ricci and Ciarrocchi have recently studied two tubular elements that can be interpreted as broken and deformed parts of *labara* or *vexilla* staff crossbars. This suggests that the residence looted and burned by the Goths belonged to a military authority of some importance, perhaps the *praefectus urbis*. Beside them were found weapons, a spearhead broken at the shank, a war-axe and a pointed hammer (one of the few discoveries of weapons in the Roman urban context).

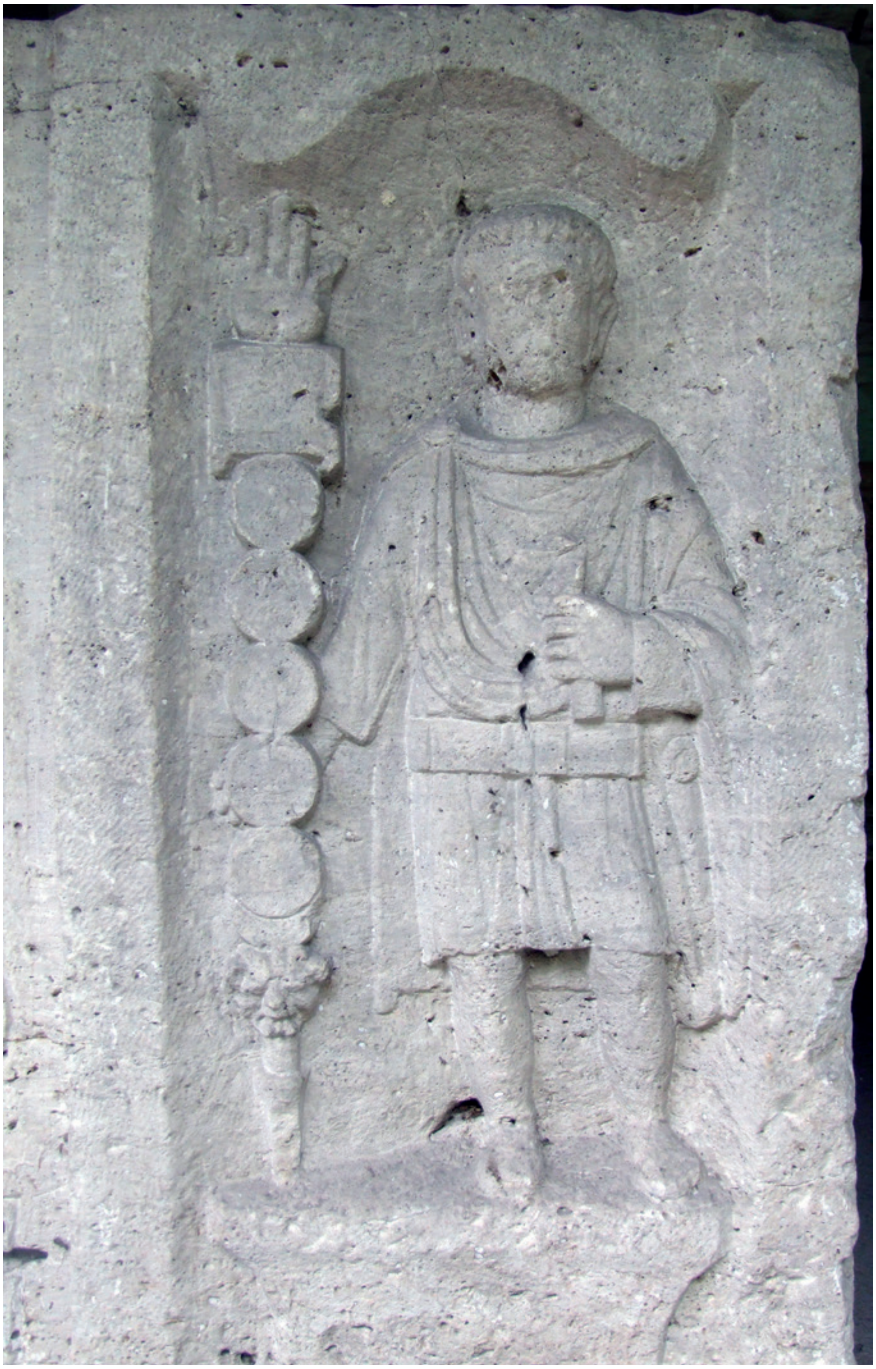
Two fragments of a *labarum* with pearled (beaded) decoration were found in the excavations of the Petocchi property in the 1960s and 1970s, which involved part of the same building unearthed in the excavations of 2006. To date, no other elements of this type seem to be known to archaeology, but such *vexilla* appear in the iconography, on coins and above all in the representation of Emperor Honorius in the Probus Diptych at Aosta. The beading of one of the two elements appears very similar to that on a *signum* from southern Russia preserved at the Musée d'Archéologie Nationale et Domaine National de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

For the reconstruction of the *labarum* (see page 38), it was assumed that the fragments were part of a single 'T'-bar. The tubular horizontal arm was probably divided into three equal lengths punctuated by the beaded array. Inside this was inserted a wooden rod, probably with globe terminals at both ends, of which the fixing holes are identified. Surviving elongated rectangular fixing slots suggest the presence of oblique support struts, perhaps in another material, between the vertical and horizontal elements of the 'T'.

The elements identified as parts of a *vexillum* are again tubular, with a raised double collar at each end, presumably to secure suspension cords in place. The thinness of the laminated metal suggests that a wooden rod was again inserted, perhaps with globe terminations. It seems likely that this crossbar was associated with the spearhead found in the same context. The lower part of this appears to be broken off, but the blade seems to be identifiable as a 'winged' type, as often associated with flags and attested from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.

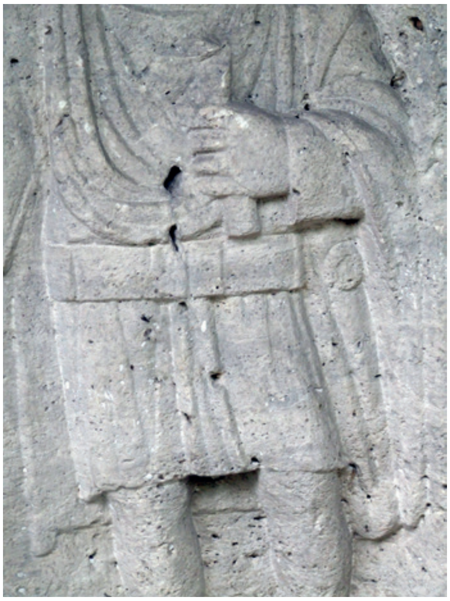
Spearheads

Thanks to the astonishing finds of Maxentian *signa* (AD 312) on the Palatine Hill, it has been possible recently to confirm that a certain category of spearheads were used for standard staffs. Two iron spearheads with rhomboidal blades fitted with lateral wings ending in small brackets, forged in one piece, led Dr Marco Ricci to this attribution (see pages 43–44). In the iconography of banners on figurative monuments and coins, they are fixed to spears of which winged heads sometimes seem to be visible. Spear blades of very similar rhomboidal shape are already present in contexts dating from the mid-3rd century. An echo of these spears seems to be visible in the depiction of Rome represented in a late manuscript of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, in which the winged spear alone is shown as a symbol of Imperial power. From the iconography it is unclear if these spearheads, and related flags, are specifically associated with the figure of the emperor as Imperial standards only, but they are likely to have been used interchangeably for Imperial or military flags.

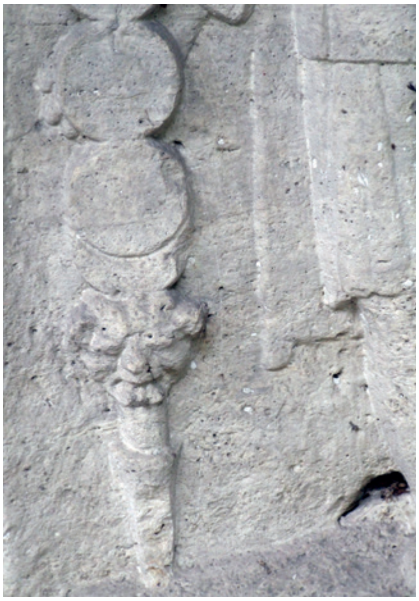


Carving of a Severan-period *signifer* of *Legio IIII Flavia* on his sarcophagus from Budapest, Hungary. Surmounted by a right hand above a small *vexillum* flanked with pendant straps or ribbons, the staff displays five *phalerae* and probably a *lunula*, with an unusual animal-head at the bottom. (Aquincum Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

The spearheads from the Palatine, with their curved wings, recall some iron spears interpreted as 'symbols of seniority' or 'parade lances' found in warrior or military graves from the end of the 4th and the 5th centuries in northern Gaul and the Rhineland. Usually these are finely inlaid with silver, copper or brass, and in some cases bear inscriptions; they have longer blades than normal, with triangular tips and central ribs, and with side-wings decorated with animal-head *protomes*. Important examples are preserved in France, like the so-called 'Bourges spear' inscribed '*Patricius Regius*'



RIGHT
The squared buckle-plates of the *cingulum* waist belt worn by the Aquincum standard-bearer suggest a date at the beginning of the 3rd century. Note that the sword scabbard at his left hip is decorated with a rosette shape – possibly even a wreathed *imago*? (Aquincum Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



FAR RIGHT
On the Aquincum sarcophagus the last *phalera* on the shaft seems to be butted down against a crescent *lunula*; below this, above the broad, tapering ferrule or *saurotyr,* is an animal-head which Töpfer interprets as a lion. The sarcophagus might have been made at Aquincum during *Legio IIII Flavia's* brief presence there while marching to join Septimius Severus for his Parthian campaigns. (Aquincum Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

and dated to the second half of the 5th century. Although this belonged to a high functionary of the Visigothic kingdom, it may originally have been produced in a Roman workshop and had the inscription added later. Another 5th-century specimen comes from Nismes, near Namur in Belgium; and another still from Bargen (Baden-Wurttemberg) in Germany, this latter dated to the 5th century although found in a 7th-century grave. A find from a Merovingian tomb at Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle), perhaps of the second half of the 6th century but Roman in origin, is of iron with silver inlays, an inscription on the blade, and zoomorphic protomes on the bronze wings. That such finds appear among particularly rich grave-goods suggests that they were symbols of power possessed by leaders.

Because of the traditional association of winged spears with hunting ('boar spears'), we cannot omit mention of one from a grave at Vermand in France, which belonged to the Germanic commander of a Roman military unit stationed there. Another find from Rhenen (Gelderland) in the Netherlands, dated to the first half of the 5th century, is attributed by its publisher to Late Roman manufacture, and associated with a unit of Franks that served in this border region. The Rhenen blade is thinner than the specimens mentioned above, and bears in silver a Latin epigram: 'Let us throw this spear into vast

C

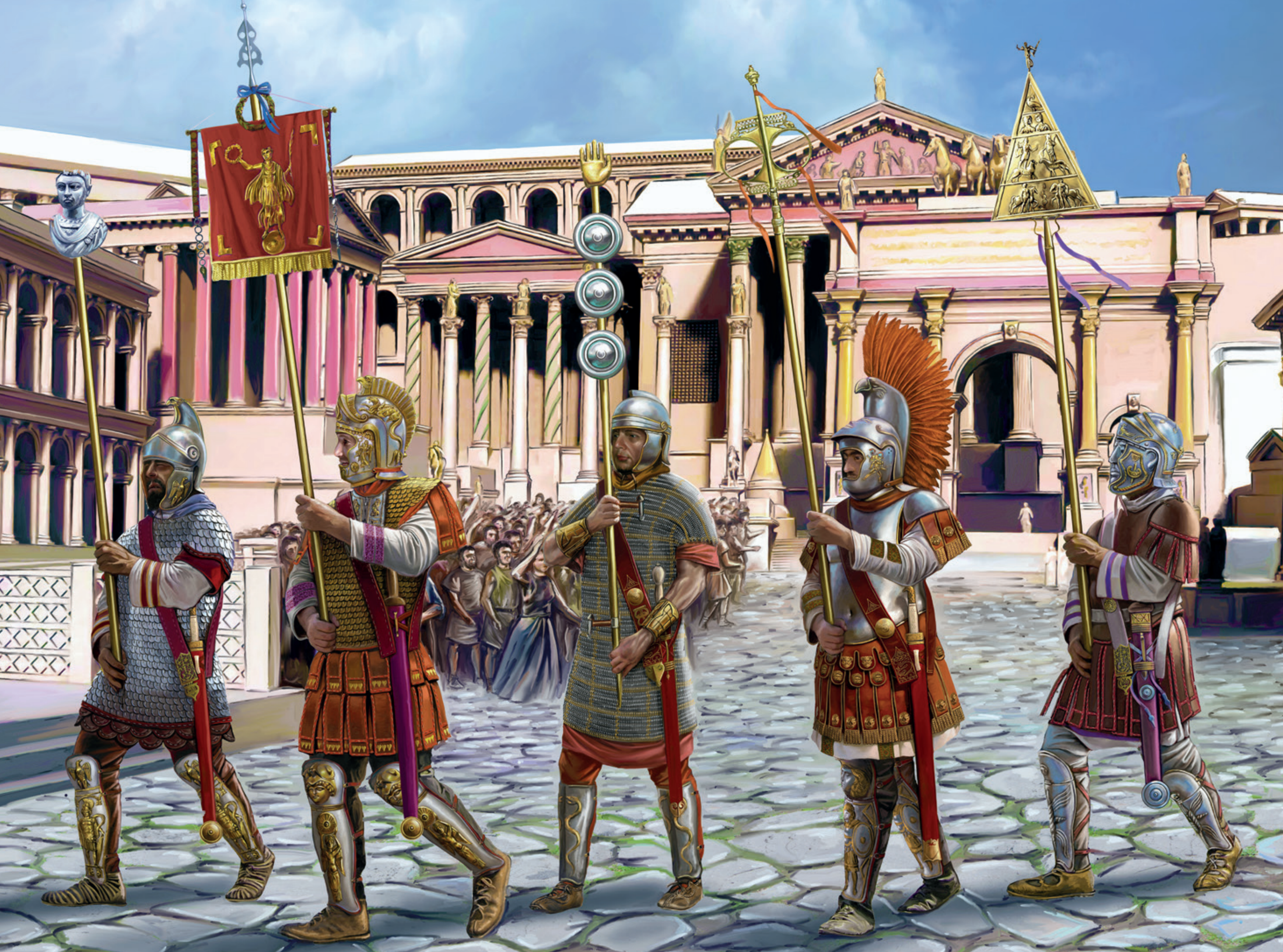
PARADE IN THE ROMAN FORUM, AD 268

The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* describes the scene at this decennial festival:

> '...And in the midst the Emperor [Gallienus] himself, wearing the triumphal toga and the tunic embroidered with palms, and accompanied… by the senators and all the priests dressed in bordered togas, proceeded to the Capitol. On each side of him were borne 500 gilded spears and 100 banners, besides those which belonged to the corporations, and the dragon flags of the auxiliaries, and the statues from the sanctuaries, and the standards of all the legions...' (SHA, *The Two Galliens*, VIII, 6).

Left to right: *Eques singularis* with *imago*; Praetorian with *vexillum*; *Signum cohortis*; Praetorian with corporation standard; and beneficiarius of Pannonian legions with cult insignia.

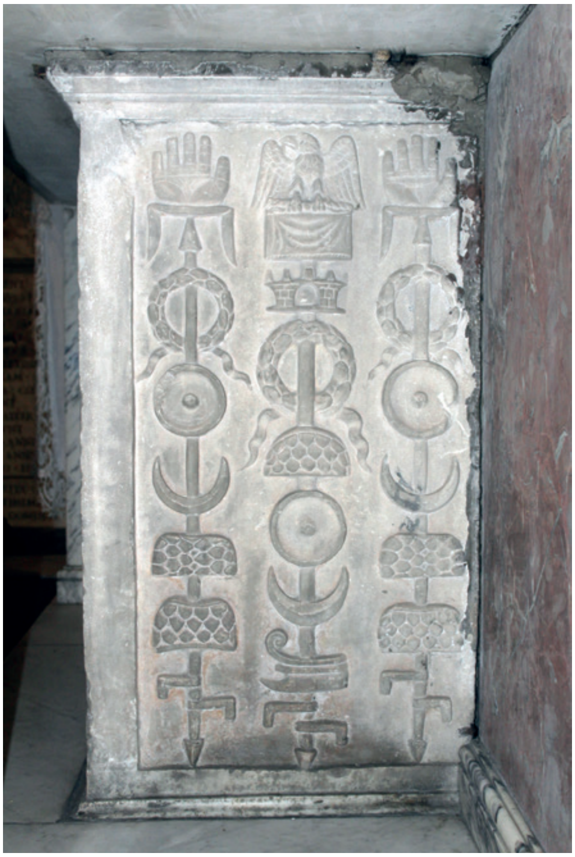
Gallienus (r. 253–268) first ruled as co-emperor in the West with his father Valerian, defeating the usurper Ingenuus and the invading Alemmani in 258 and 259. He assumed sole power upon his father's defeat and capture by the Sassanian Persians in AD 260, and subsequently defeated two more usurpers in the East, but was unable to prevent the general Postumus from forming his breakaway 'Gallic Empire', including Gallia, Hispania and Britannia. While besieging yet another usurper in Milan in 268 Gallienus was assassinated by one of his officers; nevertheless, in the chaos of the mid-3rd century his 15-year reign was one of the longest.



forests / he who loves to face fierce beasts'. The refined decoration suggests that, like the Bargen spear, this weapon may have been passed down through several generations as a symbol of rank, used either for war or for hunting.

According to Feugère, who bases his hypothesis on the specimens described, winged spears used for hunting appeared in Gaul in the 2nd century AD and became specifically military weapons at the end of the 4th century. However, the specimens from the Palatine in Rome show that by the beginning of the 4th century, at latest, such winged spears already had military functions (though this does not exclude their also being used for hunting). Obviously, it is difficult to argue particular chronological sequencing for different uses of such a basically interchangeable weapon as a spear.

According to Demaine, weapons like the Vermand, Rhenen and Bargen spears were the work of the *barbaricarii*, who had originally been weavers of gold threads (Diocletian's Price Edict: 20, 5, 8). In Late Antiquity these skilled artisans decorated metal objects, especially weapons and military equipment produced by the state *fabricae*. The *Notitia Dignitatum* indicates, on the staff of the *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum,* three *praepositi branbaricariorum* [for *barbaricariorum*] *et argentariorum* at Arles, Rheims and Trier (ND, Occ. XI, 74-77).



Roman *signa* from the period of the Gordian emperors, AD 238–244, from a funerary monument in Rome. For the outer pair, see reconstruction as Plate H6. The middle standard is surmounted with an *aquila* above a *vexillum*; below this the staff is decorated with a *corona muralis,* awarded for a successful assault on a fortified place; a wreath with hanging ribbons; a *tufa* tassel (or a rigid metal copy of one); a *phalera*; a *lunula*; and the prow of a ship, commemorating an action at sea. All three standards have pairs of down-turned handles at the foot of the staff. (Chiesa di San Marcello al Corso; *in situ* Rome, author's photo)

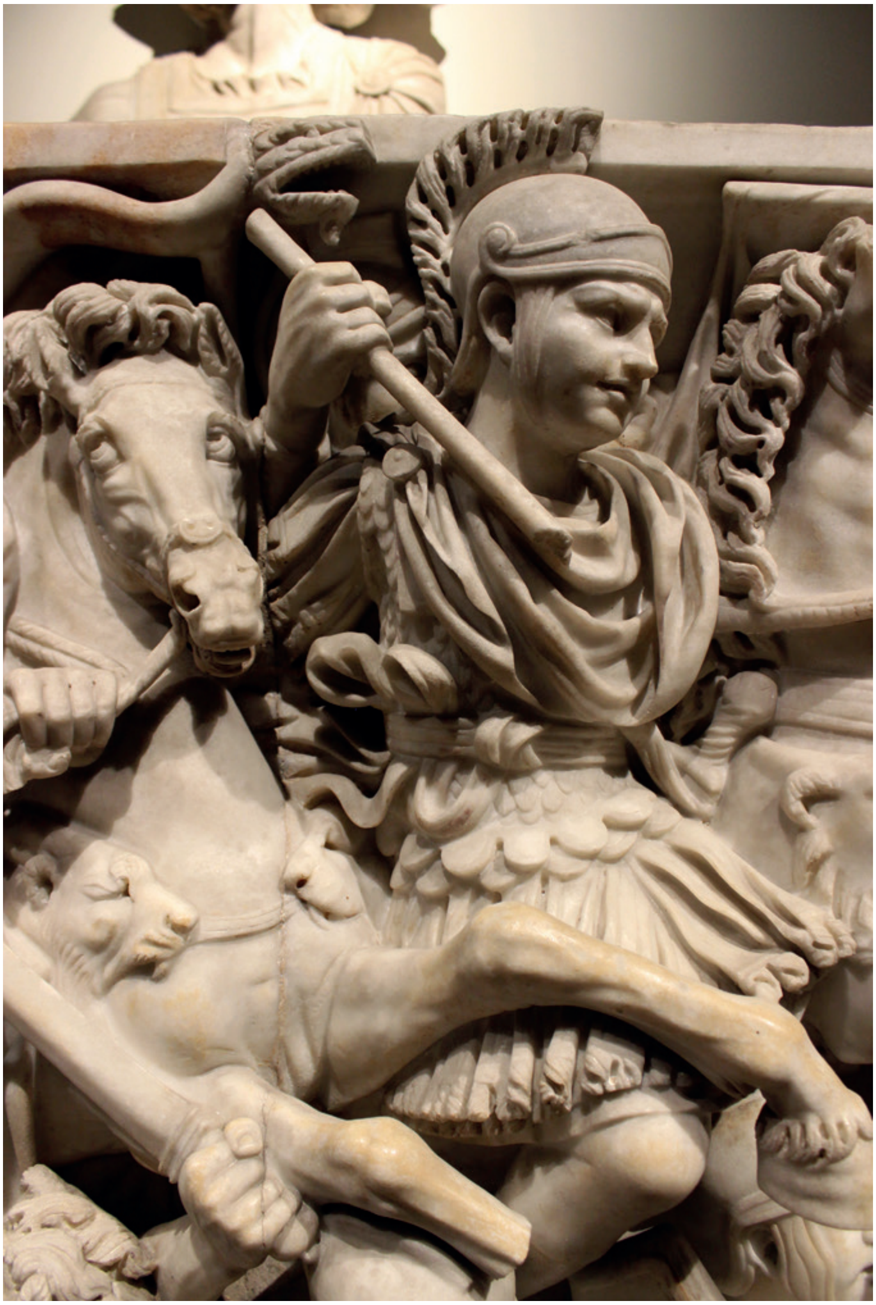
STANDARDS OF *COHORTES* AND *CENTURIAE*

Throughout the 3rd century the iconography continues to show the old *signa centuriarum*, surmounted by a hand above numbers of *phalerae* in the shape of saucers (*paterae*), sometimes in combination with *lunulae* crescents and other decorations on the shaft. One of the clearest examples are the *signa* on the stele of a Macedonian-born Roman citizen, Alexander, who served in Legio II Trajana Fortis. Found at Ramleh in the Bulak necropolis near Alexandria, Egypt, it shows two standards each with seven *phalerae*, one surmounted by an open left and the other by a right hand. (The numbers of *phalerae* seem often to be higher on late *signa,* but not invariably.)

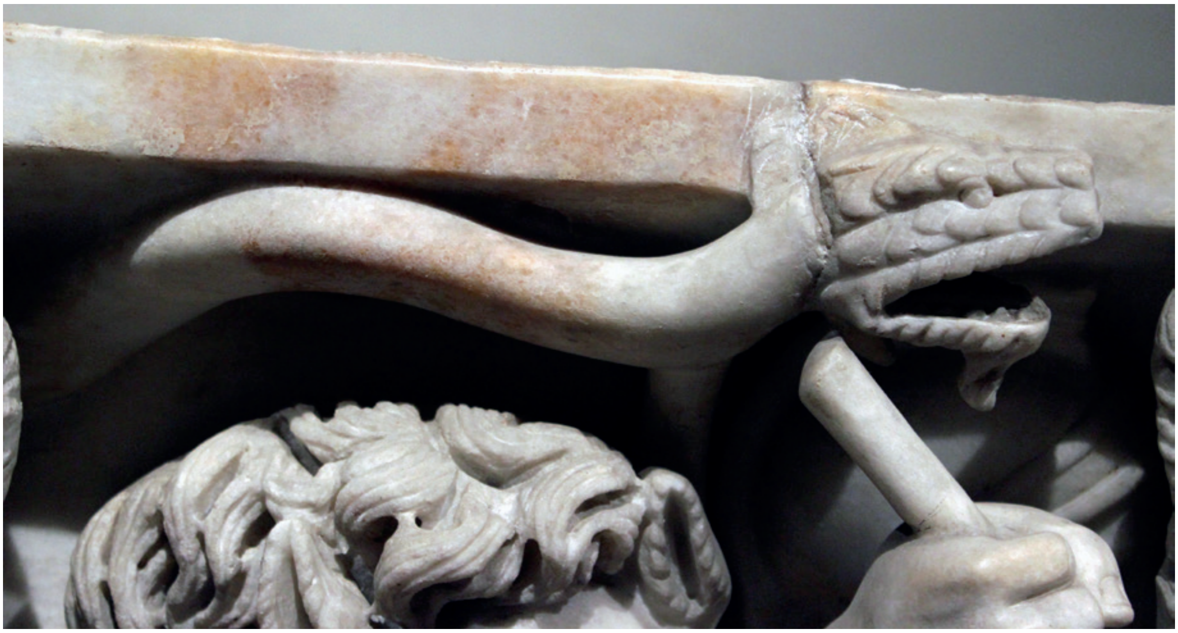
A *signum* related to Legio IIII Flavia is visible on the sarcophagus of an unidentified *signifer* of Severan date buried at Aquincum. The standard is surmounted by an open right hand, above what appears to be a small *vexillum*. Below this are five equal-sized *phalerae*; the bottom one is possibly butted down against a *lunula*, though this is hard to make out. Below this, and above a broad, tapered ferrule, is a three-dimensional head (see pages 19–20), with the strongly carved features of what is almost certainly a lion, recalling the lion-mask *protomes* found on some shield bosses.

The gravestone of L. Aurelius Andronicus, a *signifer* of Legio VII Claudia, dating from the turn of the 2nd/3rd centuries and now preserved in Belgrade Museum (CIL III 12658), shows only two *phalerae*; below them is a *lunula*, and above them the head of a bull (the *genius* or 'heraldic' emblem of this legion). According to my previous analysis of such standards (see Elite 221), this might be the *signum* of the first *centuria* of a *cohors* of the legion (perhaps Cohors II, given the two *phalerae*?). Centurial *signa* are visible on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus of about AD 260: if this is associated with the campaign of Decius (r. 248–251) against the Goths, the *signum* might be related to Legio I Italica, which fought at Abryttus.

Standards of this type begin to disappear from the iconography during the 4th century. Fundamental to this is a passage from the late 4th-century writer Vegetius (II, 13), who, after describing *aquilae* and *dracones* as the main



Draconarius of the Imperial Guard, from the time of the co-emperors Trebonianus Gallus and Hostilianus, AD 251; detail of carving on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus. Note the crested pseudo-Attic helmet. (Palazzo Altemps, Rome; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



Detail of the *draco* standard from the Ludovisi Sarcophagus; note the scaled effect on the head, and compare with Andrey Negin's drawing (opposite) of the Niederbieber specimen. (Palazzo Altemps, Rome; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

standards of the *legio* and the *cohors*, states: 'But the ancients knew that... once fighting commenced the ranks and files quickly became disordered and confused. To avert this possibility they divided the cohorts into centuries, and established individual ensigns (*singula vexilla*) for each century. The ensign was inscribed with letters indicating the century's cohort and ordinal number within it. Seeing and reading this, soldiers could not stray from their comrades.'

This corresponds with 4th-century iconography and archaeology. On the Arch of Constantine the only standards visible are cavalry *dracones*, the Imperial *labarum*, Imperial or legionary *vexilla*, and the *signa templorum*. The pedestals of the arch, re-used from another Tetrarchic monument, show *aquiliferi* and Imperial Guardsmen bearing Imperial *signa* with the images of gods and emperors. The same can be said of the *signum* from Felix Romuliana in modern Serbia, of the painted *vexillum* in the Luxor temple, and of the painted *signum* at the Piazza Armerina in Sicily. The Arch of Galerius shows *dracones* for infantry and cavalry, *vexilla* for cavalry, and *insignia triumphi*, but none of these monuments show the old infantry *signa* which are still visible on 3rd-century funerary monuments. It is therefore possible that the simplification of the *signa* within infantry units happened under the so-called 'Illyrian emperors' from Diocletian (r. 284–305) onwards, who, creating new units and new subdivisions of the legions, introduced the *draco* and *vexilla* in place of the more complex old *signa cohortis* and *centuriae*.

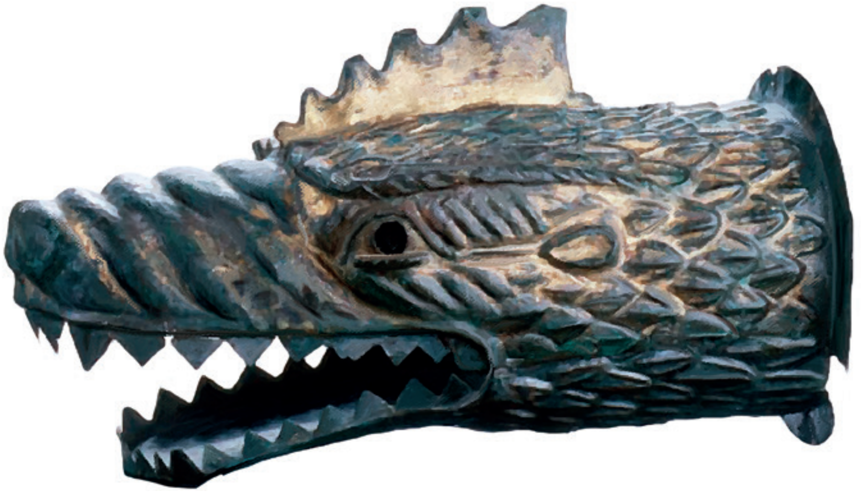
This is apparently contradicted by the use of the term *signa* by Ammianus Marcellinus (*Hist*., XXVIII 5, 3: 'dazzled by the gleam of the standards and eagles'; XXIX 5, 15; & XXX 3, 5). His status as a contemporary military witness for the years AD 353–378 makes him a particularly valuable source. However, if we analyse several other passages in his work (XVIII 2, 17; XVI 10, 6 & 10, 7), it is clear that he uses *signa* as a generic term for standards, so none of these passages can be considered as reliable testimony to the continued existence of the old type of cohort and century standards in the field until the second half of the 4th century.

We cannot dismiss another possibility, however: that some of the old *signa centuriae* continued to survive combined with *vexilla* and *labara*, since many representations of the latter on coins show *phalerae* on the staves. For example, coins of Constantine the Great minted in Arelates in AD 334 show two standards borne by armoured *signiferi* and decorated with two *phalerae* on the staff, surmounted by a *vexillum* and finally by a third *phalera* at the top. Coins from Aquileia minted the following year show *signa* with three *phalerae*, surmounted by tassels with hanging pendants; in this case there is no *vexillum*, but on all these coins the Christian monogram is incised between the two standards.

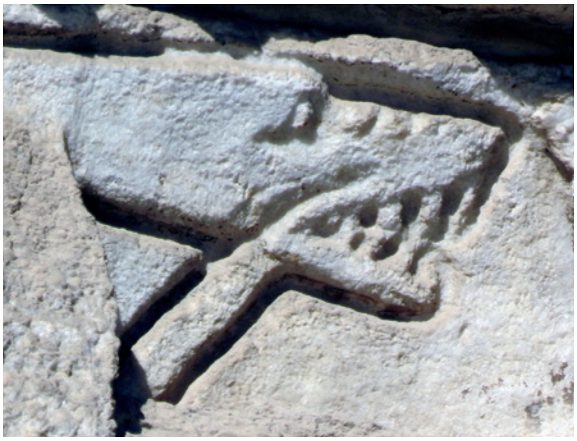
The *draco*

The *draco*, a metal dragon-head with an attached coloured fabric tubular 'tail', would become the main standard of units both of cavalry and infantry. As described in the first part of this study (Elite 221, covering the period 112 BC to AD 192), the Romans adopted *dracones* from *numeri* of foreign cavalry in Roman employment, specifically Sarmatians, Dacians and Parthians. This type of standard originated among nomadic Iranian peoples – the *Historiae Augustae* speaks of '*persici dracones*' (*Aurel.*, XXVIII, 5); and since the Sarmato-Alan world, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (*Hist.,* XXXI, 2, 16), stretched as far to the east as the Ganges, we cannot exclude the possibility of Central Asian borrowings of this image from China. Adopted by the Roman Army initially as a cavalry standard for the Hyppika Gymnasia games, the *draco* was already seen as the flag of *vexillationes* during the Marcomannic Wars of AD 168–180. Its presence within the Imperial armies is fully attested in the 3rd century, and it rose to extraordinary prominence in the 4th and 5th centuries. Its success was clearly due both to its aesthetic appeal and to its fearsome psychological impact on enemies. Despite their pagan origin, *dracones* were retained in the Eastern Roman army of Christian Byzantium until the end of the 12th century.

The Dacian or Sarmatian 'dragons' in fact had a canine head reminiscent of a wolf; this *balaur* was a symbol of ferocity sacred to cults having a special veneration of the wolf. The iconography and rare archaeological finds show that in the Roman Army these 'barbaric' standards were soon



Bronze *draco* head from Niederbieber, Germany, 2nd–3rd century AD. At the neck is a flat, raised ridge or collar, showing two rivets; the open mouth has acute triangular teeth; the top of the head has a raised, toothed 'comb'; and two holes for the stave pass through the throat and head. This example is clearly different from the imagery of Dacian or Sarmatian prototypes, which show wolf-like protruding canine teeth. (Museum auf der Festung Ehrenbreitstein, Koblenz; drawing by Dr Andrey Negin)



ABOVE LEFT
Roman cavalry *draconarii* from the Arch of Galerius, AD 298. The dragon standards can just be made out at top centre. (*in situ*, Thessaloniki; author's photo)

ABOVE RIGHT
Detail of cavalry *draco* head on the Arch of Galerius, AD 298. Note the striking similarity with the surviving Niederbieber specimen; all the heads of *dracones* on the monuments of Galerius and Constantine are similar, though not identical. (*in situ*, Thessaloniki; photo courtesy Dr Manfred Beer)

transformed into snake-like dragons (although dragon-flags were not absent from the Iranian-speaking world, either). *Dracones* are visible on the Arch of Septimius Severus (AD 203) celebrating victories in his Parthian wars of AD 194–195 and 197–199, where a *draco* standard floats above a three-tailed banner. From its original use by employed foreign mercenary bands, it spread first to Roman cavalry regiments serving alongside them, and then to mixed *vexillationes* of mounted and foot troops. It is difficult to identify the exact reasons that drove the Romans to adopt the *draco* as a flag for infantry, and also (see below) as an Imperial banner, but undoubtedly the most important factor was the gradual 'barbarisation' of their army. This process began with the growth in the numbers of allied and auxiliary contingents during the 1st century, and received a significant boost from the enlistment of Dacian and Sarmatian units under Hadrian (r. 117–138). This first prompted the adoption of elements of 'barbarian' styles of clothing, as well as of standards, which became steadily more widespread over the passage of time.

The term *draconarius* for its bearer is first verifiably found only in 4th-century documents, which might suggest a late date for the 'dragon's' introduction as a common standard in the Roman legions. However, on the Arch of Galerius (r. 305–311) at Thessaloniki, celebrating his victory over the Persians in AD 297–298, soldiers of the Ioviani and Herculiani legions display their *dracones* flanked by *vexilla*; and in the relief on the south side of the Arch of Constantine his troops at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312 are shown with *dracones* fluttering over their heads. Thus the use of these 'dragons' as the main standards of cohorts by the end of the 4th century was clearly a consolidation of an existing practice (see below, 'Standard-Bearers, organization and ranks').

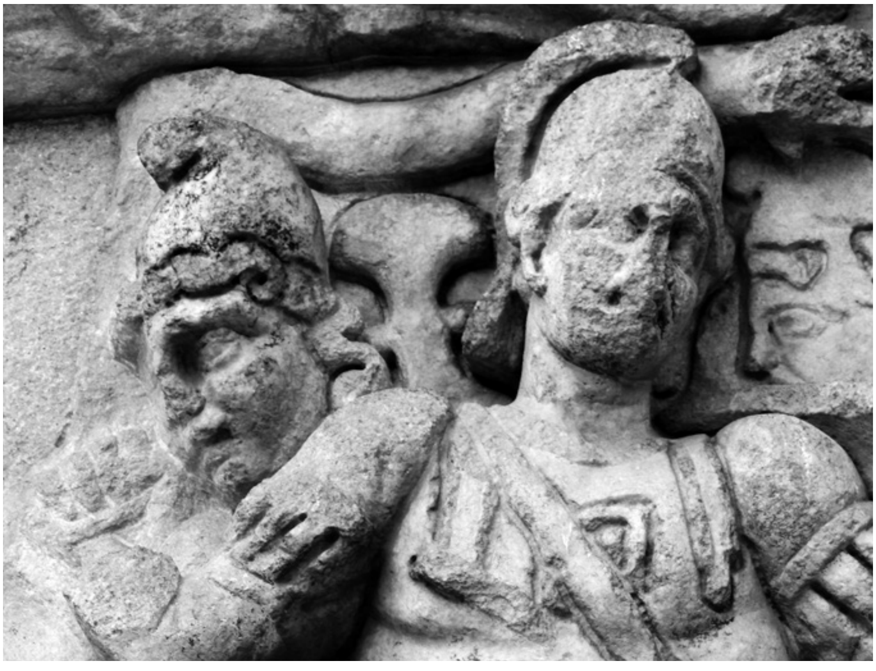
The standard consisted of a hollow, open-mouthed dragon-head to which was attached a long tube of material; a hole was cut in the lower part of the head for the staff. During the 3rd century and still in the time of Constantine, coins show the *draco* carried on a staff to which a cross-bar is attached for the suspension of a squared cloth *vexillum* bearing the image of the reigning emperor. We have an excellent mid-4th century description by St Gregorius of Nazianzius, in his oration against Julian II: '…breathing through the fearful gaping mouths of dragons, raised on high on the tops of spears, and filled with wind throughout their hollow bodies, spotted over with woven scales, present to the eye a most agreeable and at the same time terrible spectacle' (*Sermo contra Julianum*, IV, 66, v. 491 ff). Gregorius refers explicity to scales (*folides*) woven on the tubular bodies.

Another impressive description by Sidonius Apollinaris in the 5th century refers to *dracones* being used by both Roman and Vandal armies (*Panegyric of Maiorianus*, 402 ff.): 'Now the broidered dragon speeds hither and thither in both armies, his throat swelling as the zephyrs dash against it; that pictured form with wide-open jaws imitates a wrathful hunger, and the breeze puts a frenzy into the cloth whenever the lithe back is thickened by the blasts...'. Sidonius specifically describes such standards of cloth or flexible skins as being 'snaky' (*textilis anguis*), hollow inside, and with a silver mouth. While their depictions on the arches of Galerius and Constantine are carved in reasonable detail, unfortunately no traces of the original coloured finish survive.

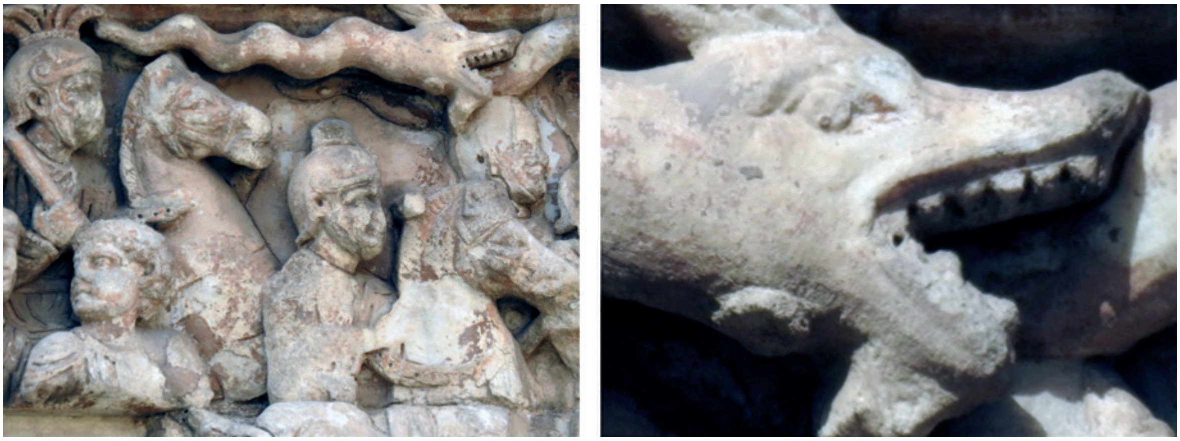
The most beautiful and well-preserved archaeological specimen is the well-known head from Niederbieber (North Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany). This is 30cm (11.8 in) long, and made of two chased copper-alloy sheets covered in relief representing scales.

The *flamoulon*

A new flag appeared in the 4th century, in the form of a sort of lance pennon. One of the first images of it is found in a mosaic from Argos, although some scholars date this to the 5th or 6th centuries. It took the Greek name *flamoulon* from its shape, recalling a tongue of flame, and in Latin Vegetius mentions *flammulae* (III, 5) among the other *signa*. Ammianus (*Hist.,* XX, 6) states that the Persian King Shapur II followed the Roman practice of marking the opening of hostilities by raising a flag in front of the commander's tent. Taking advantage of the death of Constantius II in AD 361, Shapur came to lay siege to Singare in Mesopotamia. Ammianus writes: 'Accordingly, the king... tried by peaceful mediation to bend the defenders to his will. Failing in



Detail of Roman infantry *draco* also depicted on the Arch of Galerius. By the time of the war against the Sassanian Persians in AD 297–298 the 'dragon' was the main *signum* of the infantry cohort, and is seen on the Arch being carried by cohorts of the Herculiani and Ioviani legions. At left, note the Phrygian cap. (*in situ*, Thessaloniki; photo courtesy Dr Manfred Beer)



In the marching army of Constantine the Great depicted in the frieze of the Arch of Constantine, *c.* AD 313, the *Promoti* cavalry carry a *draco;* see detail, right. (*in situ,* Rome; photos courtesy Dr Manfred Beer)

this... at the coming of next morning's light he gave the signal by raising the flame-banner (*signo per flammeum erecto vexillo*), and the city was assailed on every side'.

On the Arch of Septimius Severus the Parthian flags include, as well as the usual *dracones*, a squared *vexillum* with three tails or streamers. If Ammianus is correct, this could be the red Persian *flammeum vexillum*, and the origin of similar streamered flags adopted by the Romans from the Persians and called *flammulae* or *flamoula*. Iconography from the 5th century onwards shows that at some point the *flammulae* were transformed from vertically-hung *vexilla* into horizontal flags with streamers, which were the forerunners of the Eastern Roman flags called *banda*.

STANDARDS OF *AUXILIA* AND *LIMITANEI*

Two associated finds relevant to 3rd-century auxiliary standards come from the final layer of destruction (AD 259–260) at Niederbieber fort in the Rhineland, where the grave of a *signifer* was found close by. The first

D

THE TETRARCHY, 3rd–4th CENTURIES AD

The anarchy of the middle 50 years of the 3rd century was brought to an end by the Emperor Diocletian from AD 284. First, in 286, he appointed his general Maximian as a junior co-emperor or 'Augustus' of the West while he himself served as Augustus of the East. Then, in 293, he and Maximian each appointed a deputy (and intended successor) termed a 'Caesar': Galerius in the East and Constantius Chlorus in the West. This system was called by later historians the 'Tetrarchy' or 'leadership of four'; as an orderly system of succession it lasted only two generations, however, before the Empire was plunged into further civil wars.

(1) *Draconarius* of *Legio Herculiani*, AD 297–298

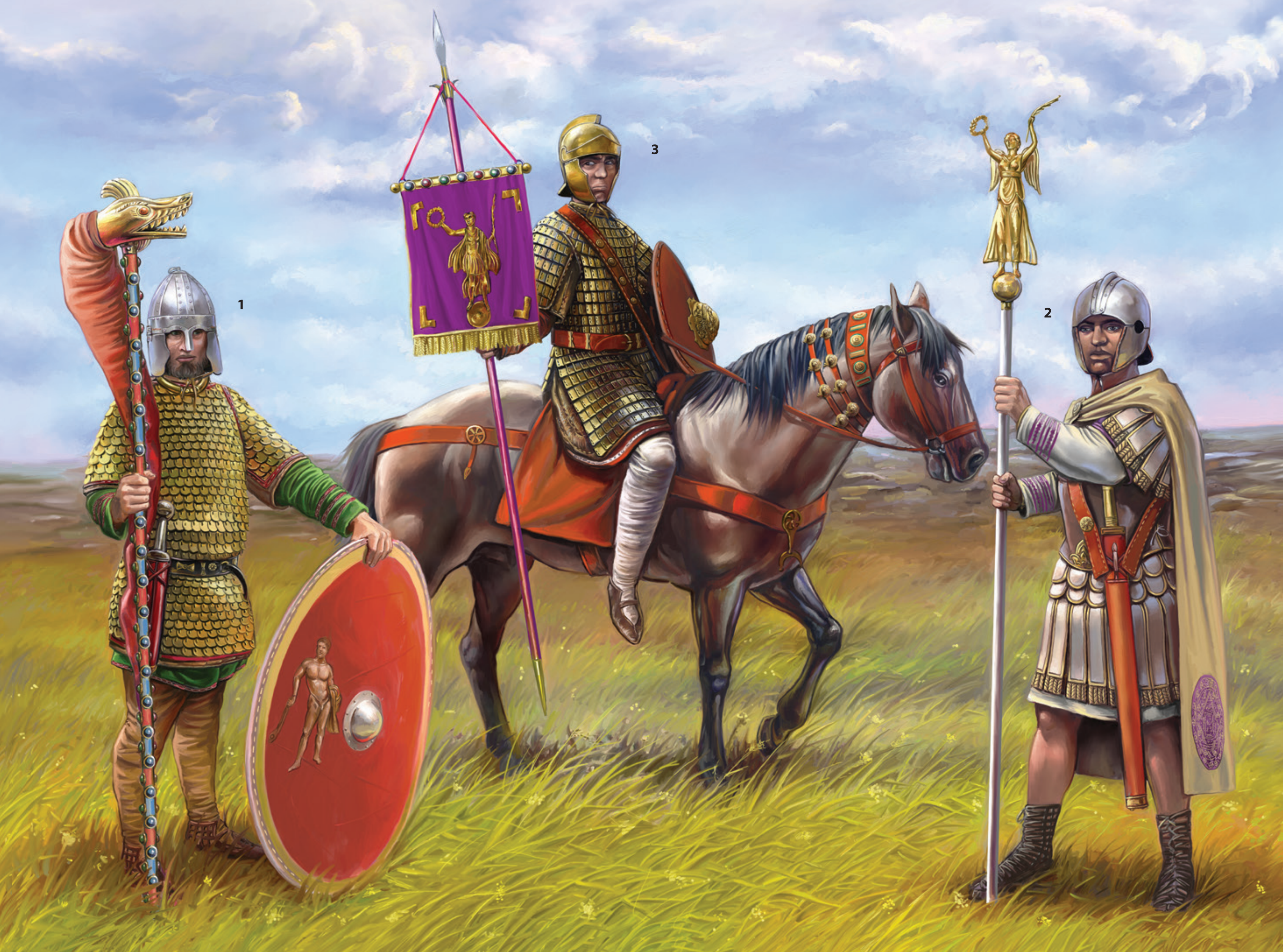
This heavily armoured *draconarius* of an elite Palatine legion (one serving in the emperor's field army) is copied from the Arch of Galerius. He is clad in a heavy *squama* and wearing on his head a *Spangenhelm* of Deir El-Medina typology. He is armed with a short sword or 'semi-*spatha*'. The *deigmaton* or blazon on his shield is taken from the same monument, where his companions hold shields with the image of Hercules, one of the gods associated with the Tetrarchy.

(2) Praetorian *signifer* with *simulacrum*; Rome, AD 300-310

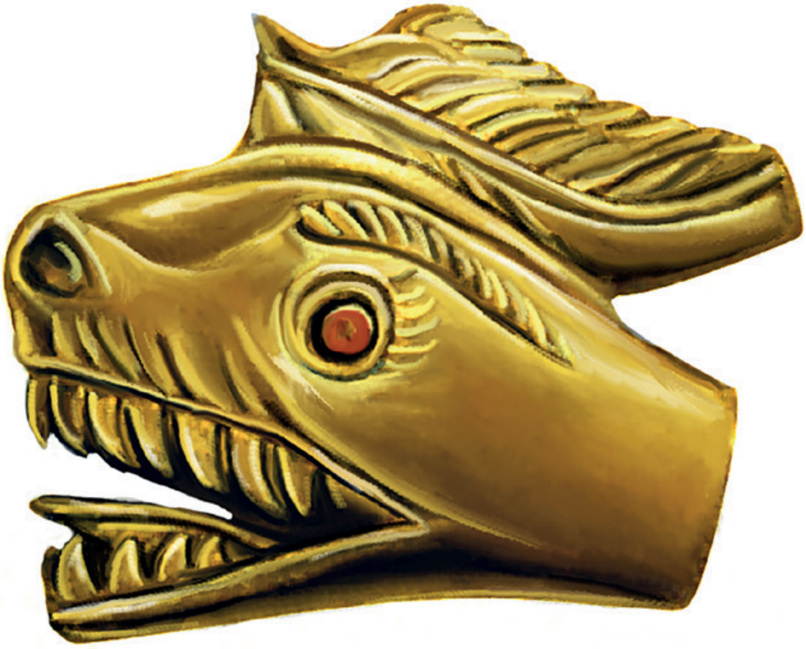
This man is protected by a typical anatomical or 'muscled' armour (*thorax heroikon*) of the Late Empire, with shoulder guards and decorative appliqués. The protective straps (*pteryges*) hanging from his *thoracomacus* under-armour garment still strongly recall the classical Greco-Roman tradition, as do his *cothurni* boots. Interestingly, the sculpture from which this is copied shows the employment of a 'ridge' helmet of the new Intercisa-Dunapentele typology.

(3) Imperial standard-bearer of Maxentius; Rome, AD 312

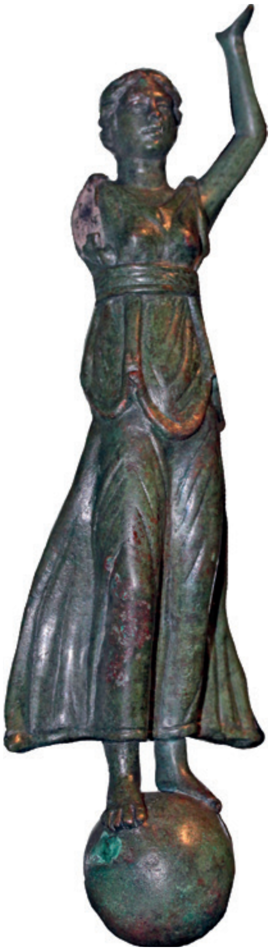
Copied from the Arch of Constantine, this soldier holds a *vexillum* which we have attempted to reconstruct from the famous finds made in recent years near the Coliseum. The design of the flag itself is copied from an image of Nike (Victory) on a *vexillum* recovered in Egypt. Note the pseudo-Attic helmet, the *squama* armour, the shield, and the tunic in the colours of the mosaics found at Piazza Armerina; we copy the horse-harness from the same source.


1
3
2

A bronze miniature model of a *draco*'s head found near the Heidentor gate at Carnuntum, the legionary fortress in Pannonia Superior. This well-detailed piece is dated to the reign of Constantius II in the early-mid 4th century AD. (Drawing by Dr Andrey Negin)



Damaged bronze statuette of Winged Victory from Carnuntum, 2nd–4th century AD, exhibited in the Museum Carnuntinum in 2017. Probably originally mounted on a pole as a *simulacrum*, the goddess would have held a shield-like symbol of victory in both raised hands. The nearest parallel is a similar statuette from Augusta Raurica – present-day Augst in Switzerland. (European private collection; author's photo, courtesy of the owner)

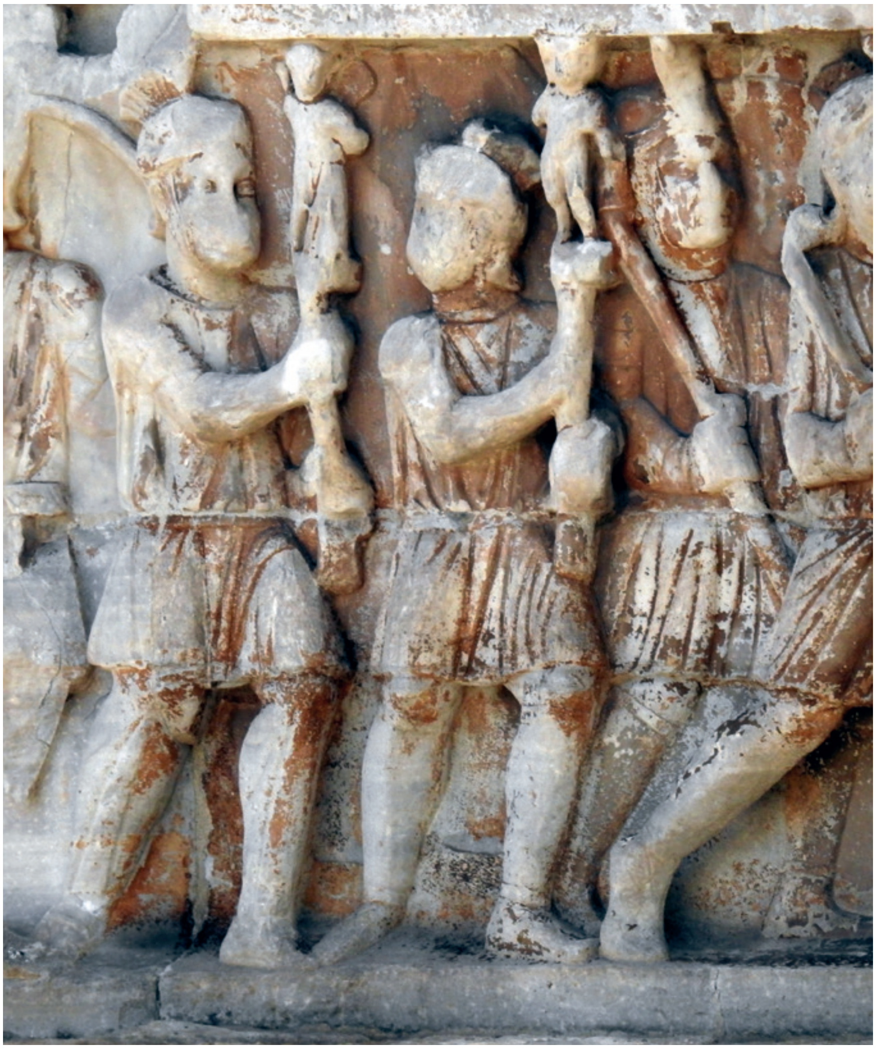


is the left-hand part of a silver plaque bearing a unit name, COH.V(II) RAET (Cohors VII Raetorum, '7th Cohort of Raetians' – see photo Elite 221, page 30). The second is a 1st-century silver disc still in use in the 3rd century, representing a triumph by either the Emperor Tiberius or Germanicus or Caligula over the Germans, with a booty of Germanic weapons at his feet. Feugère suggests that this must have been regarded as much as a generic representation of Imperial victory as a reference to a specific Julio-Claudian event. Another interpretation, by Stäcker, supports the thesis that all units, and not only the Praetorian/Imperial Guard, bore *signa* with attached Imperial images. He comes to the conclusion that this medallion was fixed to the *vexillum* staff of Cohors VII Raetorum (Equitata), and cites another medallion bearing the image of Saloninus, son of Gallienus, as dating the remains of the standard to AD 260 AD, and as direct evidence that auxiliary units of the 3rd century displayed the Imperial *imago*.

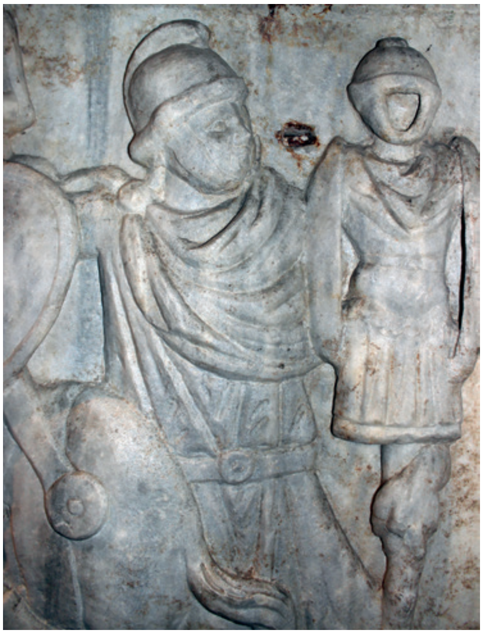
The *vexilla* of auxiliary units are well illustrated in the iconography. One of the most striking (and probably the best representation of a cohort flag) is that of the 'Terentius painting' in the Temple of Bel at Dura Europos, where officers and men of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum are offering sacrifice to their gods. The *vexillarius* is holding a red squared *vexillum*, fringed at the extremities, on which an early photo shows the image of a deity, probably Winged Victory. Above the flag cloth is either a laurel wreath in gold or a *phalera*, which can no longer be determined due to damage to the fresco. This standard was studied by Rostovtzeff, who estimated a total height of between 3m and 3.2m (118–126 in), and a cloth measuring from 57cm x 60cm to 64cm x 67cm (22.4 x 23.6 in to 25.2 x 26.4 in). The placing of the *phalera* would be unusual on standards of *cohortes peditatae*, though other (not necessarily military) flags depicted at Dura show decorative objects above the cloth of *vexilla*, including in two cases crescents and a third with a possible *phalera* resembling a bird figure. The Terentius standard staff seems to be of wood unsheathed with metal, terminating at the top in a spearhead and at the bottom in a spike (not a metal ferrule). No handle is evident, but this may be due to damage to the fresco.

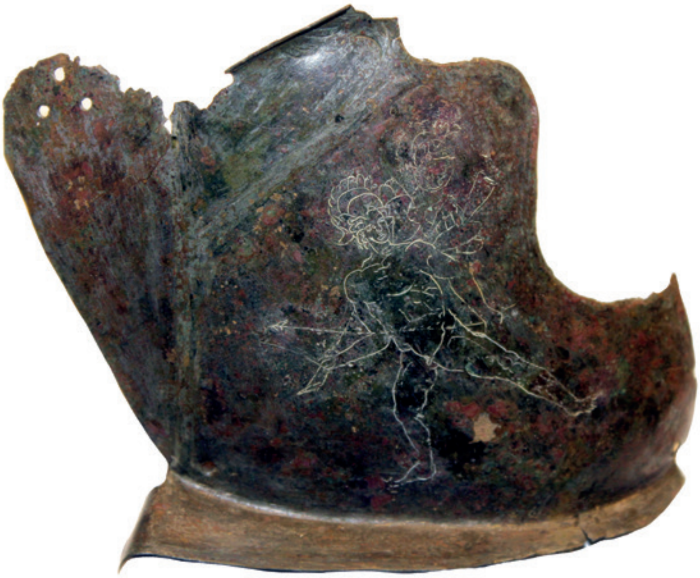
Reliable representations of standards bearing animals as symbols (*genii*) of auxiliary units are very few, and the best known is the famous gravestone from Carrawburgh (Britannia), possibly associated with the Cohors I Batavorum. This represents a bull at the top of a bare shaft, which is unusual in showing a 'trident' at the foot rather than the usual ferrule. This example suggests that such standards in the *auxilia* resembled those carried by legions.

In the Late Empire this kind of *signa* was inherited by the *limitanei*, the border units which then fulfilled some of the functions performed by the *auxilia* of the 2nd century. One striking example is the stele of the standard-bearer Lepontius, featuring a cockerel (see reproduction as Plate F1). The original gravestone is lost, but a surviving image is one of few showing such standards from the 4th century AD. However, Woods proposes



Simulacra being carried among marching troops in the frieze of the Arch of Constantine, AD 313. Discernible statuettes seem to be those of Winged Victory and Apollo; the latter might suggest a *signifer* of *Legio XV Apollinaris,* which fought for Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge. (*in situ*, Rome; photo courtesy Dr Manfred Beer)





ABOVE LEFT
Detail from the great Ludovisi Sarcophagus, mid-3rd century AD, showing a *signifer* parading with *insignia triumphi* complete with a helmet, a cuirass over a *subarmalis* 'arming doublet' with hanging *pteryges,* and a cloak. Other items at the bottom of the staff are unclear. (Palazzo Altemps, Rome; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

ABOVE RIGHT
Fragment of the face-guard of a Heddernheim-type helmet, mid-3rd century AD. It is engraved with a depiction of Mars carrying *insignia triumphi*, which suggests that the helmet might have belonged to a *signifer*. (Museum Carnuntinum, Bad-Deutsch Altenburg; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

an alternative interpretation of this *signum* as belonging to the Galli Victores, a unit of the Auxilia Palatina under the Emperor Julian during his campaign against the Alemanni.

Cavalry standards

In CIL 3316, from Lussonium (Pannonia Inferior), we have a representation of the 3rd-century standards of a *cohors equitata*, in a votive plate dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by '*P*(*ublius*) *Ael*(*ius*) / *Lucilius* [*centurio*] *coh*(*ortis*) *I Al*(*pinorum*) *Eq*(*uitatae*)'. Two identical *signa* are shown flanking a shrine; the crossbars, which terminate in hanging straps with ivy-leaf pendants, are surmounted by an eagle with lowered wings, above seven *phalerae* of successively greater radius, with a crescent at the bottom.

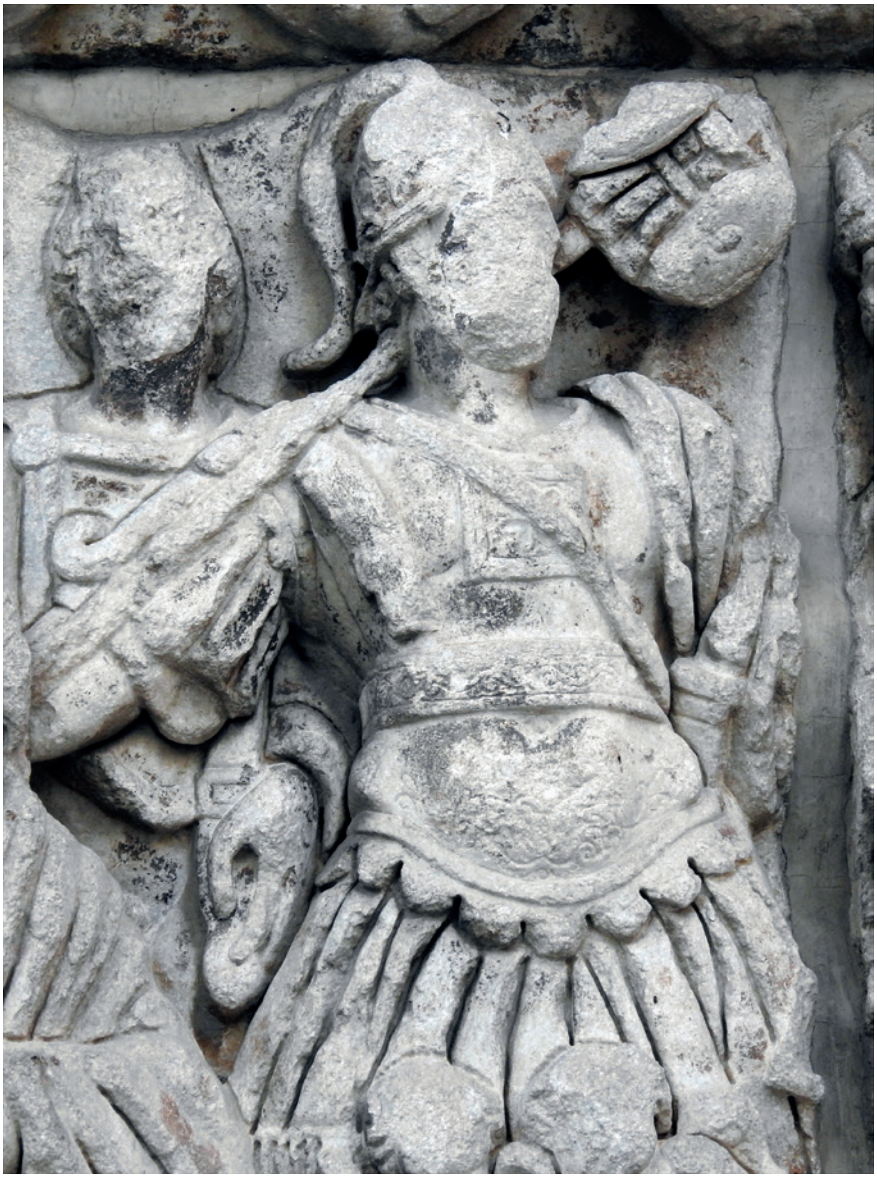
The gravestone of Valens, a *vexillarius* of Cohors II Sardorum, shows a small *vexillum*, and according to Töpfer the fact that his horse is visible on the stele makes it more likely that he was the standard-bearer of the whole cohort rather than of one of its *turmae*.

The other main visible cavalry standard is the *draco,* discussed above. An (Imperial Guard?) *draco* is shown on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus (c. AD 260), on which are represented the standards of an attacking combined force of infantry and cavalry at the time of Decius. *Vexilla* and *dracones* are the main standards of cavalry shown on Late Antique monuments (e.g. the Arches of Galerius and Constantine, and paintings at Kharga Oasis in Al-Bagawat, Egypt). The literary and iconographic sources of the Late Empire referring to formations of the heavy cavalrymen known as *cataphractarii* or *clibanarii* all suggest that the *draco* was the unique standard of such units (Amm. Marc., *Hist.*, XVI, 10, 7; Claudianus, *Ruf.* II, 364–365; *De VI Cons. Hon.*). However, Vegetius states expressly that in the late 4th century the cavalry squadrons were called *vexillationes* after the flags that they used, i.e. the flame-coloured *flammulae,* perhaps with streamers (see above, 'The *flamoulon*').

OTHER STANDARDS

Signa templorum

A passage in the *Historiae Augustae* mentions *signa templorum*, probably meaning the small statues mounted upon staffs that were kept in the sanctuaries of military camps, but also other standards bearing the images of gods and emperors. One detailed depiction can be seen on the Palazzo Mattei relief (previously dated to the 2nd century, but for which F. Gilbert proposes a date in the 3rd century). It shows a fringed *vexillum* surmounted by an eagle; the shaft is twisted, and a tassel of grass or wool is shown beneath the cloth. More interesting is the decoration on the cloth, carved in strong relief, suggesting a metal *phalera* or heavy embroidery showing a bearded bust. While the relief is broken at the level of the head of the eagle and below the tassel, it is possible that this was a *simulacrum* borne by the Praetorian



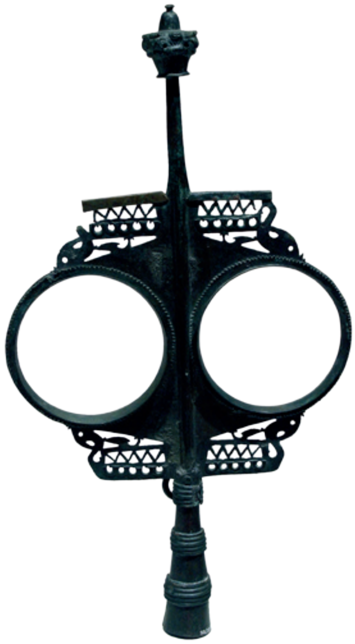
Detail from the Arch of Galerius, AD 298, showing a standard-bearer carrying miniature *insignia triumphi*, presumably in the form of a statuette, on a pole casually slanting over his shoulder. His helmet appears to be transitional between conical and pseudo-Attic typologies, and clearly has a long flowing crest. He wears a 'muscled' cuirass, apparently over two layers of protective garments, one terminating in lappets over another with *pteryges*. Note the use of both a waist belt and a diagonal baldric to his left hip. (*in situ,* Thessaloniki; photo courtesy Dr Manfred Beer) cohorts, evoking the presence of Jupiter beside the emperor; but Gilbert does not exclude that it might be an Imperial *vexillum*, if one compares the bearded image with those on monuments of the Antonine period (e.g. Column of Marcus Aurelius; Sarcophagus of Modena).

Simulacra

Simulacra are clearly visible on the Arch of Constantine, where among the marching soldiers two unarmoured *signiferi* bear on poles statues of, apparently, Apollo and Winged Victory. The Winged Victory seems to correspond with preserved statuettes of Nike, such as a specimen from Carnuntum, 29.8cm (11.7 in) high and dated between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD.

Skeptrà

Special *skeptrà* (scepters) with images of Winged Victory bearing the palm and wreath of the *triumphator* were already in use in the 4th century, although in the Christian Empire this image upon all kinds of standards was soon transformed into that of an Angel of God. According to Sozomenos (*Hist.Eccl.*, IX, 4), one of these *skeptrà* used by Stilicho was the one the Romans called a *labarum* (see below, under '*Signa Imperii*'). The Imperial sceptre surmounted by a Winged Victory or Angel standing on a globe – symbolizing the universal imperium of the *Dominus* – was sometimes paraded in front of the troops.



Head of a 3rd-century AD standard from Ephesus in modern Turkey, which may be either the military insignia of a soldier with the status of *beneficiarius*, or the standard of a Collegium Juventum. (Ephesus Archaeological Museum; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

Iubae

Iohannes Lydus lists (I, 8), among the *insignia* of royalty adopted at the same time as the *vexilla* from the Romans (after the victory of King Tarquin over his Etruscan countrymen and the Sabines), the long spears called '*iubae*' (*ίούβαι*), twelve in number, without blades but with a hanging 'mane'. These may be identified with the *tufae* that Vegetius (III, 5) includes in his listing of the visual means of signalling by movement of standards (*muta signa*): 'The *muta signa* are [by] eagles (*aquilae*), dragons (*dracones*), ensigns (*signa*), *flammulae*, *tufae* and plumes (*pinnae*)'. In the Late Empire they were no

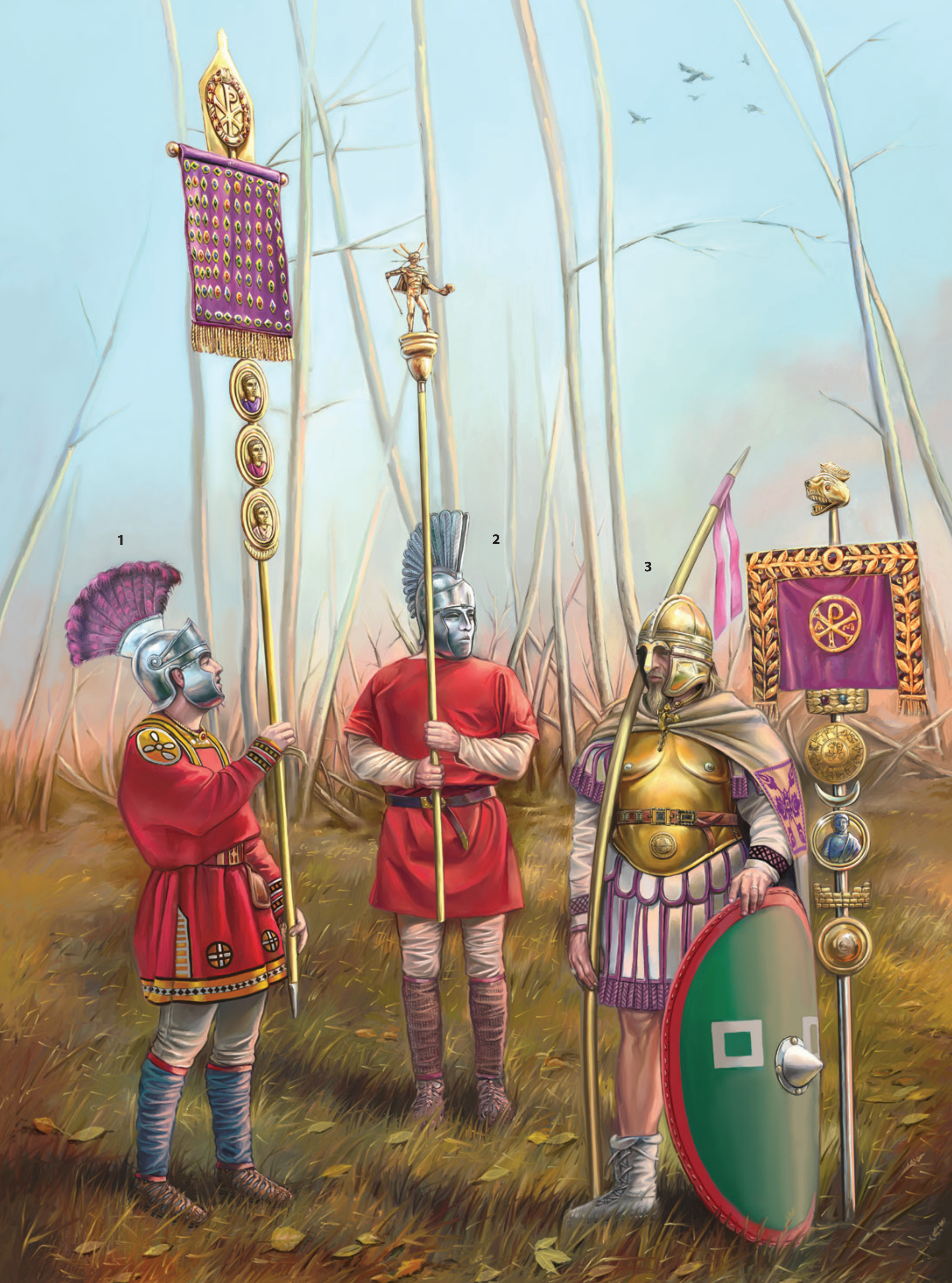
E

THE CONSTANTINIAN PERIOD, EARLY-MID 4th CENTURY AD

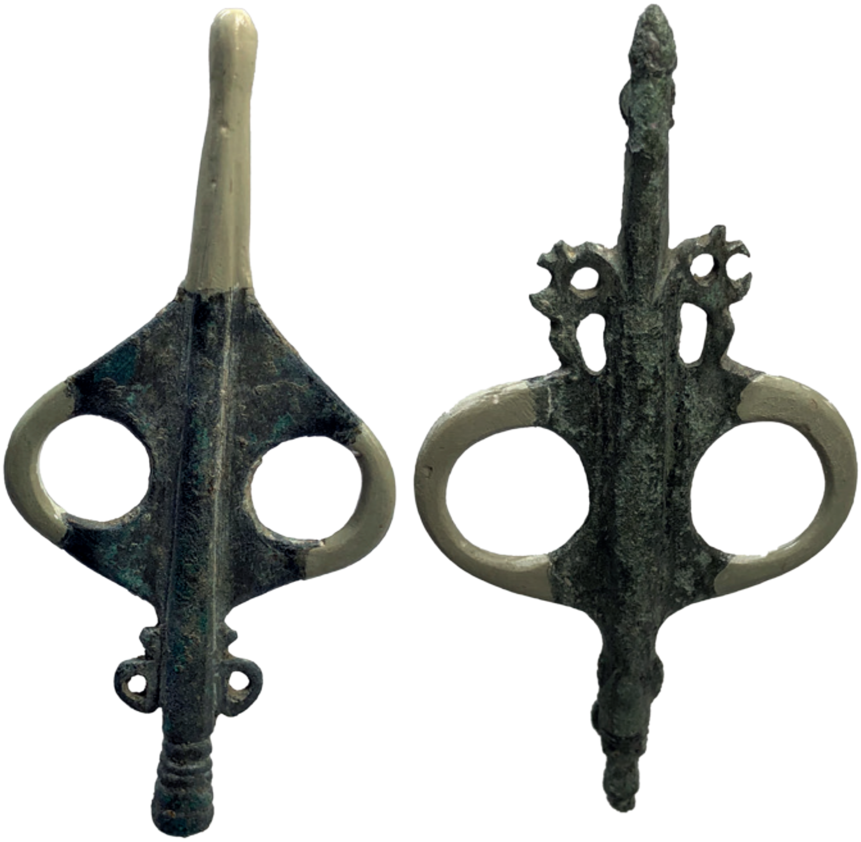
(1) *Labarum* of Constantine the Great, *c.* AD 312–325
This *signifer* is reconstructed from the figure of a soldier marching behind the emperor's chariot on the Arch of Constantine, carrying the original version of the famous Christian *labarum* (discussed in the body text). He wears short breeches (*foeminalia*) in combination with *tibiales* (pultees) and closed *calcei* boots. The same sort of dress, with a long-sleeved tunic and *bracae*, is worn elsewhere on the Arch in the scene of Constantine's *adlocutio*, by the *signiferi* bearing the *simulacra* and by the *vexillarii*.

(2) *Imaginarius* of *Legio XI Apollinaris*, *c.* AD 312–325
Again from the Arch of Constantine, this bearer of a *simulacrum* of Apollo, the Unconquered Sun, is dressed in a very similar way to the previous figure, although we have speculatively given him a masked helmet based on victory monuments of the late 3rd-early 4th centuries. The open *carbatinae* worn with *socci* recall the old *caligae* of the Early Empire. The staffs of this and the previous standard are gilded, following a description by Vopiscus.

(3) Cavalry *vexillarius*, *c.* AD 325–350
A very interesting coin of Constantine shows two Late Roman soldiers; each bears a shield, and has a draco-headed shaft to which is attached a short *vexillum*. This attempted reconstruction of one of these figures is clad in muscled armour, as shown on the coin, and a helmet of a Berkasovo II type. The shield blazon seems to be that of the Equites Dalmatae Passerentiaci. In his hand he holds a curved staff to which is attached, in Eastern fashion, a long double *vexillum* or *vellum*, as shown in the drawings of the Column of Arcadius.


1
2
3

Enamelled *fibulae* brooches, 3rd century AD, from the Balkans, which represent in miniature the insignia of *beneficiarii*. (European private collection; photos courtesy Dr Fabrizio Casprini)



doubt borrowed from barbarian allies or opponents of the Roman armies, in the form of special spears pierced with holes to accept e.g. simple horse-tails.

Insignia triumphi

These poles mounting trophies of captured enemy armour and arms were routinely paraded together with the other standards. Visible on many Late Roman monuments and artefacts, such as the Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki and the Licinius Cameo now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, they were forerunners of similar standards (*σκευη*) which are still mentioned in Byzantium in the 10th century.

Insignia of *beneficiarii*?

Special insignia were paraded in ceremonies and religious festivals by soldiers ranking as *principales*, such as *optiones* and *beneficiarii*. Some are spearheads of triangular shape and widely embossed with figures, while others incorporate circular holes to which, as well as to the staff, tassels and ribbons could be attached.

Such insignia were indicative of the rank of a ‘non-commissioned’ officer or of his belonging to a particular type of troops, and many specimens of possible *beneficiarii* insignia have been recovered in 3rd–4th century contexts. One find from Saone (Simandre) shows a massive head, of triangular section (see Plate C, right); this, and a similar example from Augst, might be either the heads of standards or of *beneficiarius* spears with ashwood staffs.

Many standard spearheads have been interpreted as *beneficiarii* insignia, but few of them were used in such a way. Ribbons, tassels and pendants were usually attached to *beneficiarii* insignia, and an interesting specimen from Ephesus represents a standard-like staff head with two round side-openings. However, similar standards are thought to have been employed by various civic *collegia* (e.g. SHA, V*ita Aureliani* 34: '*vexilla collegiorum atque castrorum*'; 'the *vexilla* of the associations and of the military camp'), so the exact identity of archaeological finds is unclear.

SIGNA IMPERII

Imperial standards and the *Hasta Summa Imperii*

The main symbols of the universal Imperial power were the standard, the sceptre and the spear.

The Imperial *vexillum*, i.e. the one close to the person of the emperor and which ultimately signalled his presence on the battlefield, is not easy to identify for the 3rd century AD. Some images show an eagle above a squared cloth, and one is tempted to recognize this as the Imperial flag. A difficulty is that a coin of Heliogabalus (r. AD 218–222) represents it in two copies, but F. Gilbert proposes that for practical reasons duplicates of this emblem might have existed. It would simply be easier to keep replicas in each place where the emperor went regularly, rather than carrying a unique example at all times; this seems to have been the case with the Imperial *labarum*, discussed below. I would suggest that the emperor had his own standard, but that replicas were distributed among the troops and raised in the places to which he travelled.

One of the most interesting archaeological discoveries of recent years is a series of objects associated with a Roman emperor – in all probability Maxentius (*c*. AD 312) – found near the Meta Sudans on the northern side of the Palatine Hill in Rome. They consist of:

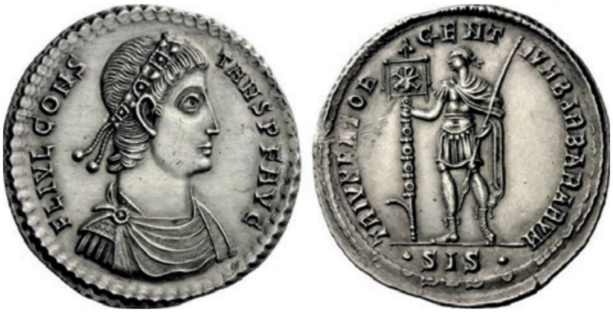
(1) Three parts of Imperial sceptres: (1a) a short sceptre in *oricalcum* (gilded copper-alloy), iron, wood and gold, with a floral socket supporting a green glass globe; (1b) two spheres of gilded glass, with lightly carved figures, perhaps related to a longer sceptre; and (1c) a conical fragment of a third sceptre.

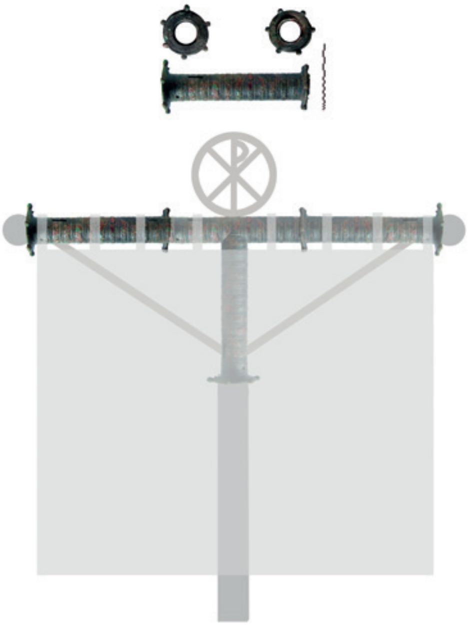
(2) A chalcedony sphere, light-blue in colour, probably a *globus* to support the figure of a Winged Victory or an eagle.

(3) Four spearheads with 'winged' iron blades and shanks of gilded copper alloy and painted wood. These were probably from four different *vexilla-labara*, the 'wings' being used to attach the cords of hanging flags, as visible on many coins.

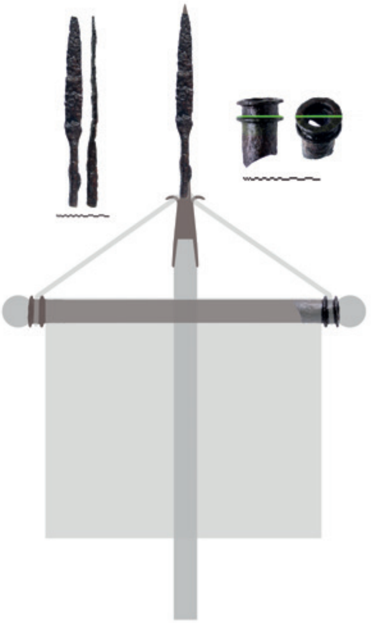
(4) Three spearheads of large dimensions, one in iron and the other two in iron with *oricalcum* elements. The first of the latter has a simple blade, the other a six-vaned head supported by a floral structure. It is even possible that the two *oricalcum* examples were attached to the same shaft, forming a unique double-headed *hasta summa imperii*, as visible e.g. on coins of Caracalla (r. 212–217). Spears with more than one head held by emperors are attested on coins of

Silver medallion, AD 350, depicting the Emperor Constans I in military costume. The portrait obverse is inscribed FL. IUL. CONS/ TANS PIUS P.F. AUG. The reverse shows him above .SIS. (for the Siscia mint), and surrounded by the inscription TRIUMFATOR GENT/ IUM BARBARARUM ('Triumpher over the Barbarian Peoples'). He holds a *vexillum*, with a curved handle below six *phalerae* on the staff alternating with short transverse elements. At the top is a banner bearing the *chi-rhô* monogram on the cloth, which hangs from a crossbar with pendant straps or ribbons; this is surmounted by a triangular finial with lobes at its three points – which may represent a spearhead? (Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 59, lot 658)





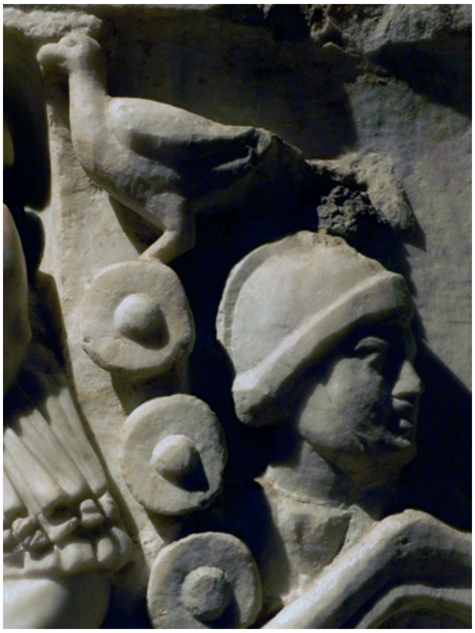
RIGHT
Tubular elements (black) of a standard, AD 410, recovered from the Aventine Hill in Rome; and attempted reconstruction (grey) as a *labarum*. (Graphic by and courtesy of Dr Marco Ricci)



FAR RIGHT
Tubular elements and spearhead (black) of a standard, AD 410, recovered from the Aventine Hill, Rome; and attempted reconstruction (grey) as a *vexillum*. (Graphic by and courtesy of Dr Marco Ricci)

Constantine I and Constantine II. They were a continuation of the ideology of the *hasta summa armorum imperii* or *hasta pura*, which was still described by Festus in the 4th century as ‘the supreme symbol of the armies and of the Imperium’. This concept survived in medieval Byzantium, where the emperor and his closest guardsmen were armed with a particular kind of spears, the *spathovaklia* or *romphaia*, for public appearances as well as on the battlefield.

All the described finds, at the moment of discovery, were wrapped in silk and linen cloth, and it seems probable that at least parts of these fabrics were fragments of the associated banners themselves, as strongly suggested by the use of purple dyes or red lacquers and the traces of gold threads. Other organic traces suggest that they were deposited in poplar-wood cases. Italian archaeologists have interpreted these finds as *insignia* hidden by the Praetorians of Maxentius either just before or immediately after his defeat at the Milvian Bridge (see pages 43–45).

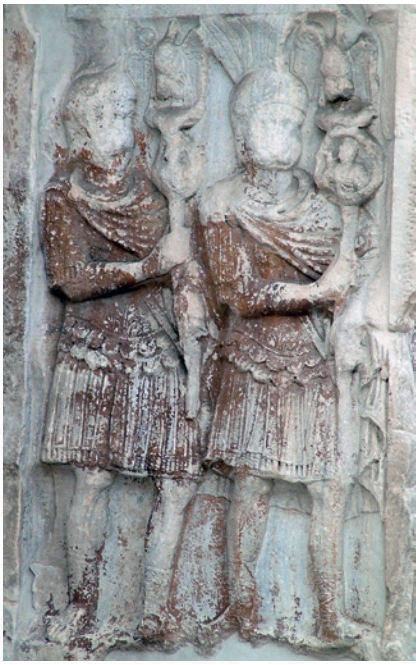


Detail from the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, *c.* AD 260, depicting the *signum* of a Praetorian *cohors* and *centuria*, with an *aquila* surmounting a staff dressed with *phalerae*. (Palazzo Altemps, Rome; author’s photo, courtesy of the Mueum)

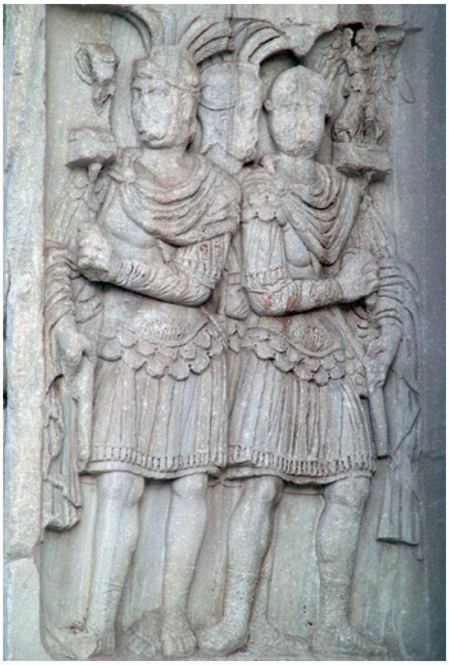
The Imperial *labarum*

From the reign of Constantine the Great a new Imperial standard appears in the Roman military. In AD 325, after the defeat of Licinius, this new *vexillum* became that of the Empire and appeared as such on coins, between two soldiers, sometimes with the inscription ‘*Gloria Exercitus*’ (‘Glory of the Army’). Although the etymology of the name has been debated for centuries, plentiful evidence for this *labarum* (or *labourum,* or *laborum*) as the personal emblem of Constantine and his successors includes many images, especially on coins, and also written sources.

In his biography of Constantine, Eusebius of Caesarea writes that in October AD 312, on the eve of his last battle



FAR LEFT
Praetorian standard-bearers carrying *aquilae*, in carvings dated to *c.* AD 300–310 on the pilasters of the Arch of Constantine. The two identical *signa* are surmounted by an eagle with outstretched, wreathed wings. Below the eagle's pedestal is a large *phalera cum imagine*, incorporating an Imperial bust with the right hand raised palm forwards. (*in situ,* Rome; author's photo)



LEFT
Praetorian *signiferi* carrying *simulacra* statuettes, from the pilasters of the Arch of Constantine, *c.* AD 300–310. The soldier on the left bears an undecorated staff (note its short length) surmounted by a deep pedestal supporting a single figure, probably Apollo. At the bottom edge of the bearer's muscled cuirass two layers of lappets are visible, over a single range of long, fringed *pteryges*. The *simulacrum* carried by the man on the right depicts Winged Victory, holding a palm-frond in the left hand; the right arm is now lost, but probably held an upraised wreath-crown. This soldier, alone of the figures on the Arch's pilasters, wears a 'ridge' helmet of Intercisa–Dunapentele typology, introduced into the Roman Army during the 3rd century. This detail speaks both of the varied equipment used within the Guard, and of deliberate care on the part of the sculptor. (*in situ,* Rome; author's photo)

before Rome against Maxentius, the emperor saw an apparition of a cross superimposed on the sun and the words '*IN HOC SIGNO VINCES*' (in Greek, *ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*) – 'By this sign you will conquer'. This vision, according to Eusebius, was shared by the entire army. In the night Christ appeared to Constantine and exhorted him to put the sign on his standards, which would assure him of victory. Constantine immediately obeyed (Eusebius, II, 30): 'At dawn of day he arose, and communicated the marvel to his friends: and then, calling together the workers in gold and precious stones, he sat in the midst of them, and described to them the figure of the sign he had seen, bidding them represent it.'

Developed from the cavalry's war banners, the *labarum* at the time of Constantine was the main flag of the Empire. It was a squared red-purple *vexillum* decorated with precious stones, surmounted by the Christian *chi-rhô* monogram as a finial, and later bearing golden images of Constantine and his sons Crispus and Constantius II (see Plate E1). Eusebius describes Constantine's *labarum* displayed in the gardens of the Imperial Palace in Constantinople (II, 31):

'A long gold-overlaid shaft (*δόρυ χρυσῷ κατημφιεσμένον*) formed the figure of a cross (*σταυροῦ σχήματι*) by means of a horizontal bar laid over it, and at the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones (*στέφανος ἐκ λίθων πολυτελῶν καὶ χρυσοῦ συμπεπλεγμένος*), on which is the symbol of the name of the Saviour, i.e. two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P being intersected by X in its centre – a monogram that the Emperor usually wore on his helmet at a later period. From the crossbar of the spear was suspended a brightly embroidered cloth, decorated with precious stones which blazed like a thousand lights; and which, being also richly embroidered with gold, presented an indescribable degree of beauty.' Importantly, Eusebius also writes that 'this banner was of a squared form, and the upright staff, whose lower section [i.e. the part below the crossbar] was of great length, bore a golden half-length portrait of the pious emperor and his children on its upper part, beneath the trophy of the cross, and immediately above the embroidered banner'.

This must mean that on Constantine's original standard the Imperial *imagines* were not embroidered on the cloth, but applied to the staff, i.e. that they were on *phalerae* positioned above the cloth banner and below the *aedicula* enclosing the Christian monogram. In AD 312 Constantine had only one son, Crispus; two Imperial images might have been stripped from other standards on the eve of battle, but otherwise it seems fairly fruitless to speculate about what the artisans might practically have achieved within a few hours of receiving Constantine's original instructions. The portraits of Constantine's two sons mentioned by Eusebius might have been added only five years later, in 317, when they reached the rank of 'Caesar'. What is certain is that on his Arch dedicated in 315 the *labarum* shown following the emperor's chariot is surmounted by a trapezoid *aedicula* in which the *chi-rhô* is probably displayed inside a wreath, but has an undecorated staff.

We should also be careful in representing the Constantinian flag already with the cross or the *chi-rhô* painted or embroidered on the cloth. That is not how Eusebius described it, but as being covered with gold embroidery and precious stones in an unspecified pattern. On coins of AD 326–327 the surface of the flag is decorated with three medallions, probably images of Constantine and his sons. This may be the great standard mentioned by the sources as employed in battle against Licinius in 324. By that date Crispus had already been 'Caesar' for seven years, as had the child Constantius II. Whether these *imagines* were embroidered into the *vexillum* or applied separately remains unclear.

The *labarum/labaron* became the chief standard of the whole Roman Army and of the Empire; in AD 361 St Gregorius of Nazianzius mentions 'the great symbol, which marches in procession along with the Cross, and leads the army, elevated on high, being... king (as one may express it) over all the other standards (βασιλεῦον τῶν λοιπῶν συνθημάτων)'.

F FROM CONSTANTIUS II TO THEODOSIUS I, 4th CENTURY AD

(1) Lepontius, *signifer* of *Galli Victores* (?); Gallia, AD 357

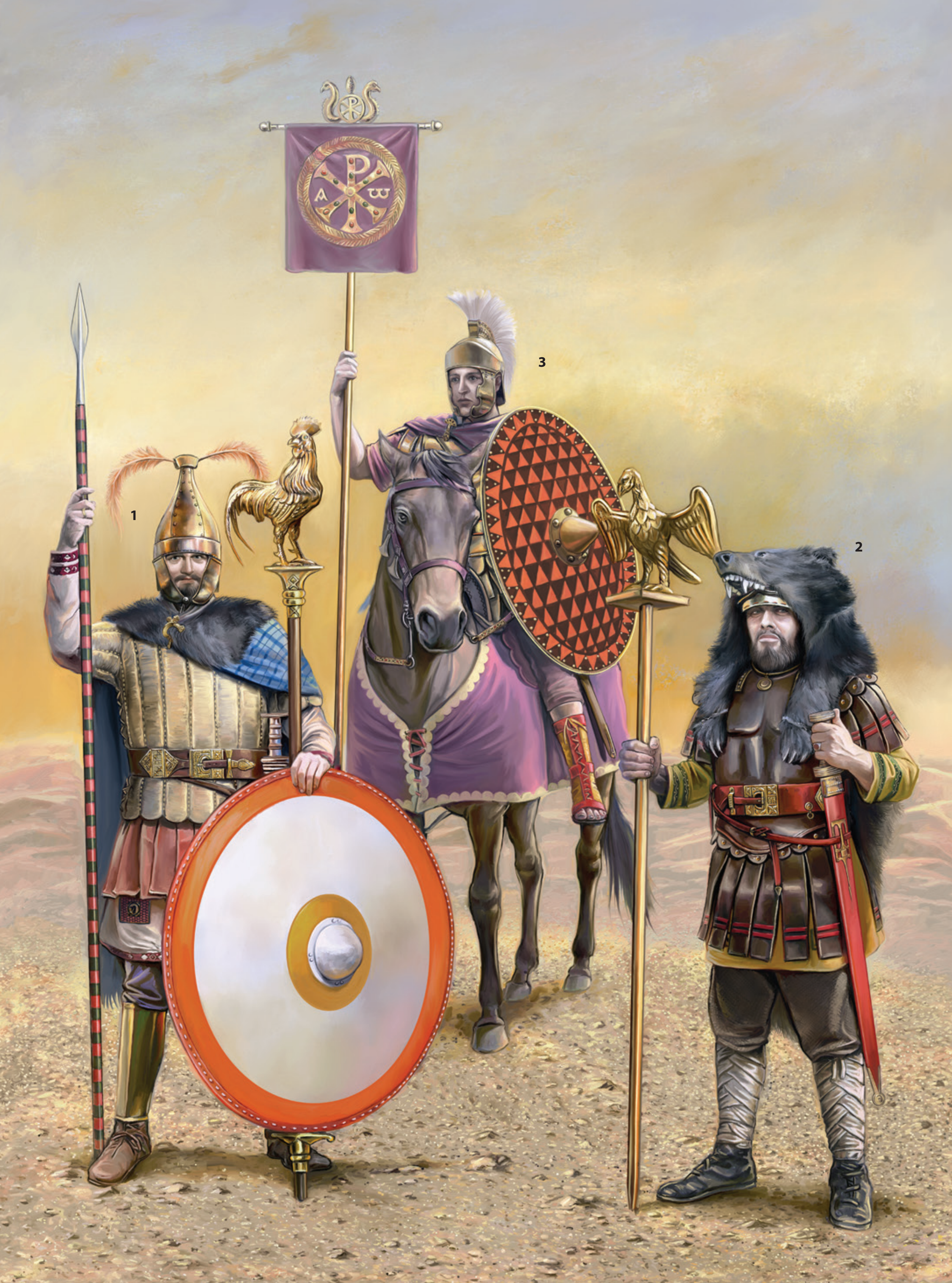
Woods (see Bibliography) suggests that this cockerel standard from Lepontius's funerary stele may be associated with the Galli Victores, a unit of the Auxilia Palatina serving under the Emperor Julian during his campaign against the Alemanni. The reconstruction of the helmet is very problematic. Lepontius seems to wear a *juba equina* (horse-hair crest) attached to a conical helmet, but this helmet has two symmetrical holes in the bowl, which are more likely for a model of the Intercisa-Dunapentele type. A possible explanation is that the two holes are in reality only a separated support for a sort of double transverse crest.

(2) *Aquilifer legionis*, mid-4th century

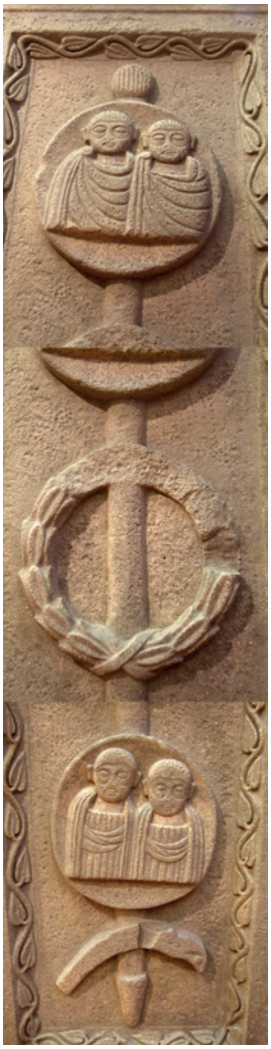
This eagle-bearer of one of Julian's legions is reconstructed according the description by Vegetius. Note the bear's pelt worn over his helmet, and the *lorica minor* composed of a leather corselet worn over a *thoracomacus* of coarse silk and other padded material. The *aquila* standard is copied from a late specimen variously dated between the 4th and 6th centuries, which is preserved at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

(3) *Vexillarius* of *Domestici Protectores Sacri Divini Lateris*; AD 395

This cavalry standard-bearer of the Imperial Guard is copied from the surviving Freshfield drawings of the lost Column of Arcadius and Theodosius, with the colours reconstituted from Racinet; he carries the Imperial *Vexillum* surmounted by a bronze Christian emblem preserved in the Madrid Museum. Note the pseudo-Attic helmet; the muscled bronze cuirass is worn over a *thoracomacus* with two ranges of *pteryges;* and old-fashioned *foemoralia* breeches worn with *cothurni* boots. His weapon (hidden here) appears to be a sort of late Greek-style *parazonium*, attached by a chain. The broad shield has a conical *umbo* typical of the period, after finds from Kerch. Note the unusual cover on his horse, anticipating the caparisons of the Middle Ages.


3
1
2

From the original *labarum* other models evolved. The *labarum* decorated with the simple cross, the Christian monogram, or with the inscription '*IN NOMINE XRI VINCAS SEMPER*' ('In the name of Christ you will always conquer') became one of the Imperial standards and symbols of supreme Imperial power until the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. *Labara* embroidered with the cross or the *chi-rhô* are visible on coins of the co-Emperors Valentinian I and Valens (r. 364–378). An early 5th-century *labarum* is visible in the hands of the Emperor Honorius (r. 393–423) in the Probus dyptich. The Christian monogram or the inscription on such standards was embroidered '*acu pictu*', i.e. in gold thread upon a background of dark violet-purple colour, and the flag was often fringed at the edges. At the end of the 5th century the standard described by Eusebius disappears from the iconographical sources, to reappear only some centuries later in the shape of a rigid plaque, mentioned among the Imperial *skeptrà*, as more a symbol of the Empire than a battle flag.

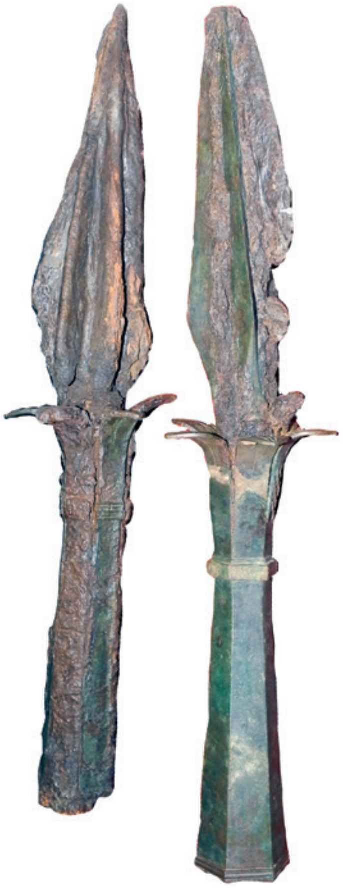

Carved depiction of a standard, presumably Imperial or Praetorian, from a sandstone gate pilaster at the Emperor Galerius's palace and headquarters of Felix Romuliana in Serbia, dated to AD 305–306; compare with another from the same site, Plate H2. The dual portraits are presumed to depict the *Augusti* and *Caesares* of the Second Tetrarchy; note that in both cases the left-hand figure is slightly larger than the right. (Zajecar Museum; author's photos, courtesy of the Museum)

Imperial Guard standards

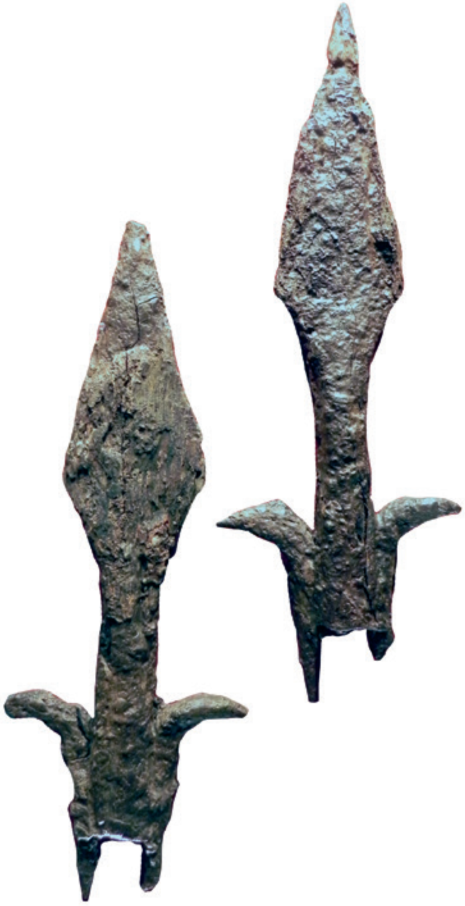
Literary sources provide incidental but clear references to the images of emperors displayed on such standards. Herodian's description of the initial stages of the rebellion against Maximinus Thrax in AD 238 simply confirms that units guarding the emperor, most likely the Praetorian Guard, carried such *imagines* (VIII, 5, 9: 'The imperial bodyguard, which was involved in the plot, ripped Maximinus's pictures from the standards'). Even the sudden and brief elevation of Didius Julianus in AD 193 had seen the Praetorians attaching pictures of him to their standards (Herodian, *Rom.Hist*., II, 6, 11). However, a coin of Trebonianus Gallus (AD 251–253) shows a large circular device on a pole planted between two eagles; this might be either an Imperial image, or simply a wreath-crown.

The Arch of the Argentarii (AD 204) provides by far the clearest depictions of Praetorian *signa* of the Severan period, on three rectangular relief fields on each of which is represented a single standard. From the foot upwards, these identical *signa* show a handle on a tapered shaft, then two bell-shaped tassels carved with vertical wavy recesses. Above these are a *lunula*, and another object covered with a pattern of downturned scales contrapposed to the *lunula*, which Töpfer has identified as a wreath. Above this are a second *lunula*; a *corona muralis*; and a narrower oakleaf wreath, followed by a short undecorated section and an *aedicula*. This suggests that originally a bust of Geta was depicted here, but was deleted after his assassination by his brother and co-emperor Caracalla and the *damnatio memoriae* which followed. Then comes a second narrow oak wreath showing a small oval ornament at the front, and above that a bust of Septimius Severus wearing armour and *paludamentum*. Above this *imago* is another portrait, again placed over an oakleaf wreath, and showing a beardless man in armour and *paludamentum* whom all scholars identify as the young Caracalla. Above this is a fringed *vexillum*; and the standard is finally surmounted by an eagle with laterally outstretched wings and the head turned to the left side, sitting on a crosspiece. *Signiferi* are also mentioned for the Equites Singulares in AD 200; a unique sarcophagus from Rome, representing the Lions of Caracalla, shows them brandishing the usual *vexillum*.

During the Dominate (the Late Empire from AD 284 onwards) we find *signa* of Imperial Guard units represented at the entrances of fortresses and palaces. A Praetorian standard, perhaps with the images of Maxentius



FAR LEFT
Spearheads of Imperial *vexillum* or *flamoulon* in oricalcum (gilded copper alloy), AD 312, from Palatine Hill, Rome. (Museo Nazionale Romano; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

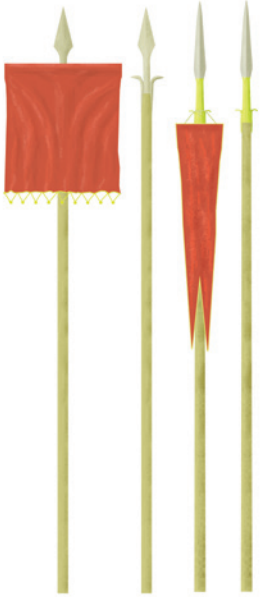


LEFT
Iron spearheads of Imperial *vexilla*, AD 312, from Palatine Hill, Rome. (Museo Nazionale Romano, author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)

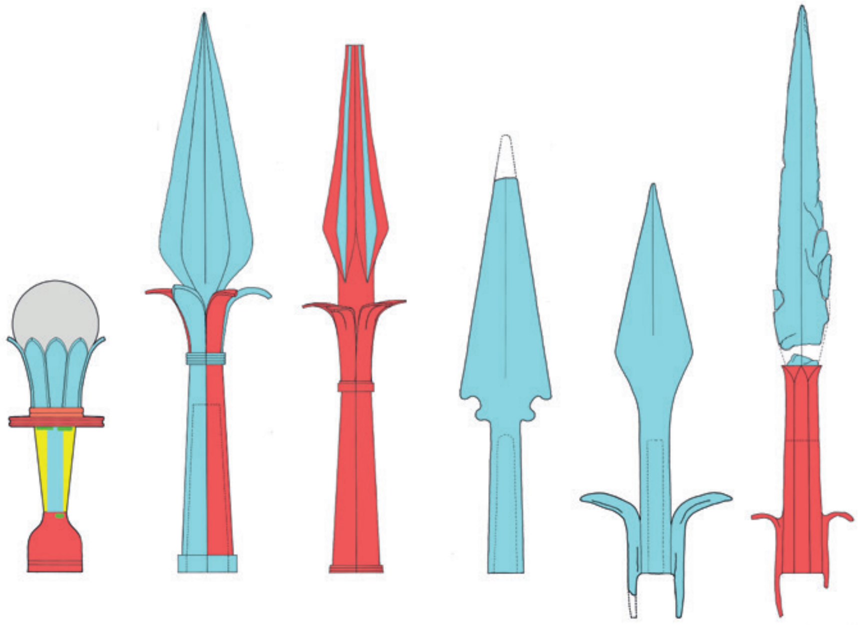
and his father Maximianus (r. 286–305), is painted at the entrance of the famous Villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina in Sicily. Although very damaged, the standard shows two *imagines* painted in natural colours alternated with *tabulae*, while the *tabulae*, *phalerae* and staff are gilded. The same elements can be seen on the sculpted *signa* of Galerius (r. 305–311) from his palace of Felix Romuliana (at Gamzigrad, Serbia).

The last representations of Praetorian standards and their bearers can be found on the column pilasters of the Arch of Constantine, which is puzzling when we remember that Constantine disbanded these cohorts. These representations are remarkably similar to the Piazza Armerina painting, where a late Praetorian *signum* is certainly depicted. In considering a possible explanation, we must note that there is a conspicuous relationship between the reliefs on these pilasters and reliefs from the Antonine–Aurelian period which are also incorporated in the Arch. Perhaps, for artistic reasons, the sculptors of the pilasters copied the styles of the earlier reliefs down to imitating individual *signa*; but it is surely far more probable that the pilasters themselves, perhaps like many other components on the Arch, were simply recycled. Their style suggests that they could not date from long before the reign of Constantine, so it is possible that they were re-used from a monument erected by Maxentius, who gave the Praetorians their last conspicuous moment of glory. The standards shown are two

Reconstruction of some of the *signa* whose heads were recovered on the Palatine, including a *vexillum* and a *flamoulon*. (Graphic by and courtesy of Dr Marco Ricci)



Composition of sceptre and some of the spearheads from the Palatine excavations: red-brown = copper alloy, blue-grey = iron, light grey = glass, yellow = wood. (Graphic by and courtesy of Dr Marco Ricci)

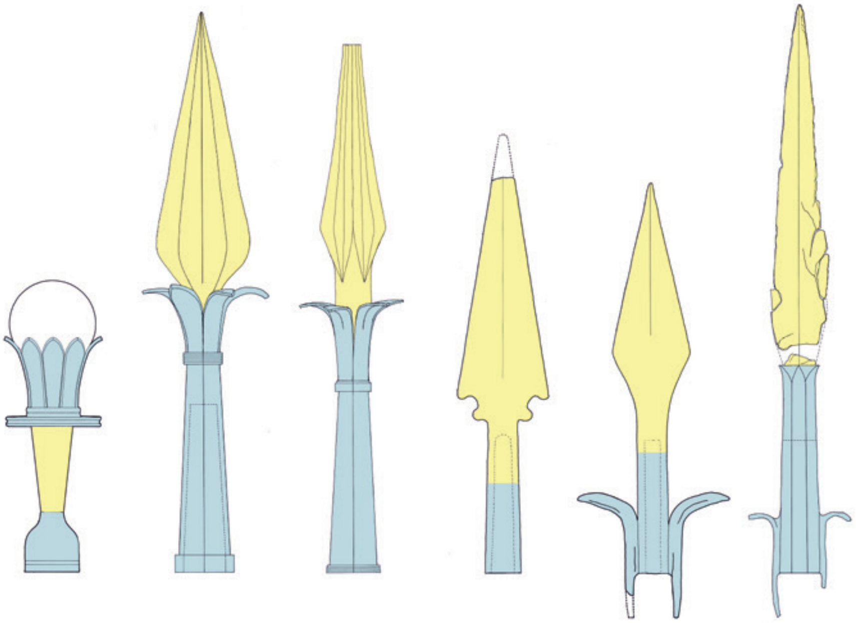


aquilae incorporating an Imperial image; a couple of *simulacra* of Winged Victory, and another two representing a god (Apollo?) and Winged Victory; and two with an open right hand at the top, above the *imago clipeata* of an emperor.

The Praetorian cohorts disbanded by Constantine after the battle of the Milvian Bridge (Zosimus, *Hist*. II 17, 2,) were replaced by new Imperial Guard units which must certainly have had their own standards. Although the idea advanced by Speidel, that some Praetorians might have been incorporated in the newly established Constantinian units, might be correct, they would hardly have kept their old standards under the new regime. We know (see above) that the emperor's portrait was soon displayed on the flag of the Imperial *labarum*, so the same might have been true of Guard standards. It is clear that for his *labarum* Constantine took inspiration from the previous standards of Praetorian units, who alone had used coupled *phalerae* with Imperial *imagines* or had *vexilla* embroidered with such images. Imperial portraits embroidered on *vexilla* and *labara* are shown on the so-called Licinius Cameo now in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and on various coins of Constantine the Great. The Somerville Gem shows the Christian monogram, presumably in metal or wood, fixed at the top of the staff, and this would obviously have been quicker to manufacture than having it embroidered on flags.

This latter practice only begins to be visible in the coin record from the time of Constantine the Great's sons. Coins of AD 348, depicting an emperor standing left with a standard and two captives, show a *vexillum* flag hanging from the staff and embroidered with three alternative motifs: either a cross, a *chi-rhô*, or a cross-*rhô* (coins of Constantius from Antioch, Nicomedia and Antioch respectively).

The *labara* or *vexilla* of the Imperial Guard heavy cavalry and infantry represented on the Freshfield drawings of the now-lost Column of Arcadius and Theodosius in Constantinople (built AD 401–421) have the Christian



This graphic indicates not the composition of the Palatine finds, but the traces of organic materials with which the sceptre and spearheads had originally been in contact: grey = fabrics, so possibly the cloth *vexilla*; yellow = wood, so possibly protective cases for transport. (Graphic by and courtesy of Dr Marco Ricci)

monogram embroidered. The *chi-rhô* on the cloth is flanked by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, recalling the words of God: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega', i.e. the beginning and the end of everything (see Plate F3). The staff is surmounted with the *Chrismon* repeated in a medallion.

The *dracones* carried by the Imperial Guard were in purple, heavily decorated and embroidered. Ammianus (*Hist*., XVI, 10, 7) describes such standards in the triumphal procession of Constantius II in Rome in AD 356 as gilded and purple *dracones*, encrusted with precious stones and with the body covered with precious silk: 'And behind the many others that preceded him he was surrounded by dragons, woven out of purple thread and bound to the golden and jewelled tops of spears, with wide mouths open to the breeze and hence hissing as if roused by anger, and... their swollen tails following in the wind' ('*Eumque post antegressos multiplices alios purpureis subtegminibus texti circumdedere dracones hastarum aureis gemmatisque summitatibus inligati, hiatu vasto perflabiles et ideo velut ira perciti sibilantes caudarumque volumina relinquentes in ventum*'). The words of Ammianus closely recall those of St Gregorius of Nazianzius describing the contemporary standards of the Imperial Guard in Constantinople (see above, 'The *draco*').

STANDARD-BEARERS

Organization and ranks

In his work on the Roman Army, Vegetius (*Epitome de Re militaris*, II, 7) lists the standard bearers of the legions. Vegetius is writing about his own period – the late 4th century – but sometimes refers to previous institutions that had survived until his day. Beginning from the highest rank, he names the eagle-bearers (*aquiliferi*) who carried the *aquilae*, then the image-bearers (*imaginarii* – termed *imaginiferi* in most Late Roman sources) who carried the portrait images of the emperor; he further claims that these were entrusted to the legion's 1st Cohort. After them he lists the other standard-bearers (*signiferi*) carrying lesser *signa*, adding that 'they are now [i.e. at the end of the 4th century] called *draconarii*'. This rank hierarchy may already have been established by the reign of Aurelianus (r. AD 270–275), since the *Historiae Augustae* (*Aur*. XXXI, 7) states that during that time the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra had 'been pillaged by the eagle-bearers (*aquiliferi* – note the plural word) of the Third Legion (Cyrenaica), along with the standard-bearers (*vexilliferi*), the dragon-bearer (*draconarius* – singular), the horn-players (*cornicines*) and trumpeters (*liticines*)'.

Today most scholars date the *Historiae Augustae* to the late 4th or early 5th century, but drawn from many earlier sources, which makes the dating of specific references uncertain. By the time we find textual attestation for the rank of *draconarius*, the *dracones* had already become established within the hierarchy of Roman standards. In the early 3rd century it would seem that they were probably in use only among the cavalry and *vexillationes*, and for some time the rank designation of their bearers probably remained *signiferi*. Later, probably in the course of the 4th century, the *draco* came to be considered the main *signum* of the infantry too, and the designated rank of its bearer changed accordingly to *draconarius*. At the end of the 4th century, Vegetius mentions unit standards within the legion only for the *centuriae* and the *cohortes*, using the terms *vexilla* for the former and *dracones* for the latter, and specifying (see above) that the *dracones* were carried by *draconarii*, who had formerly been called *signiferi*.

According to Schenk, in this passage Vegetius is speaking in contemporary terms only about the *draconarii*, while his mention of the *vexilla* as flags of the *centuriae* is drawn from an older source. But, although Vegetius describes *centuriae* and their *vexilla* as historical (XI, 13), note that he attests the continuing existence of the legions' *aquilae*, while unit standards other than *vexilla* and *dracones* seem to have disappeared, being replaced with centurial 'flags' and cohortal 'dragons'. Vegetius assumes ten dragon-bearers per legion, one for each cohort.

G

THE 5th CENTURY AD

(1) *Draconarius* of *Legio II Augusta*; Rutupiae, Britannia, early 5th century

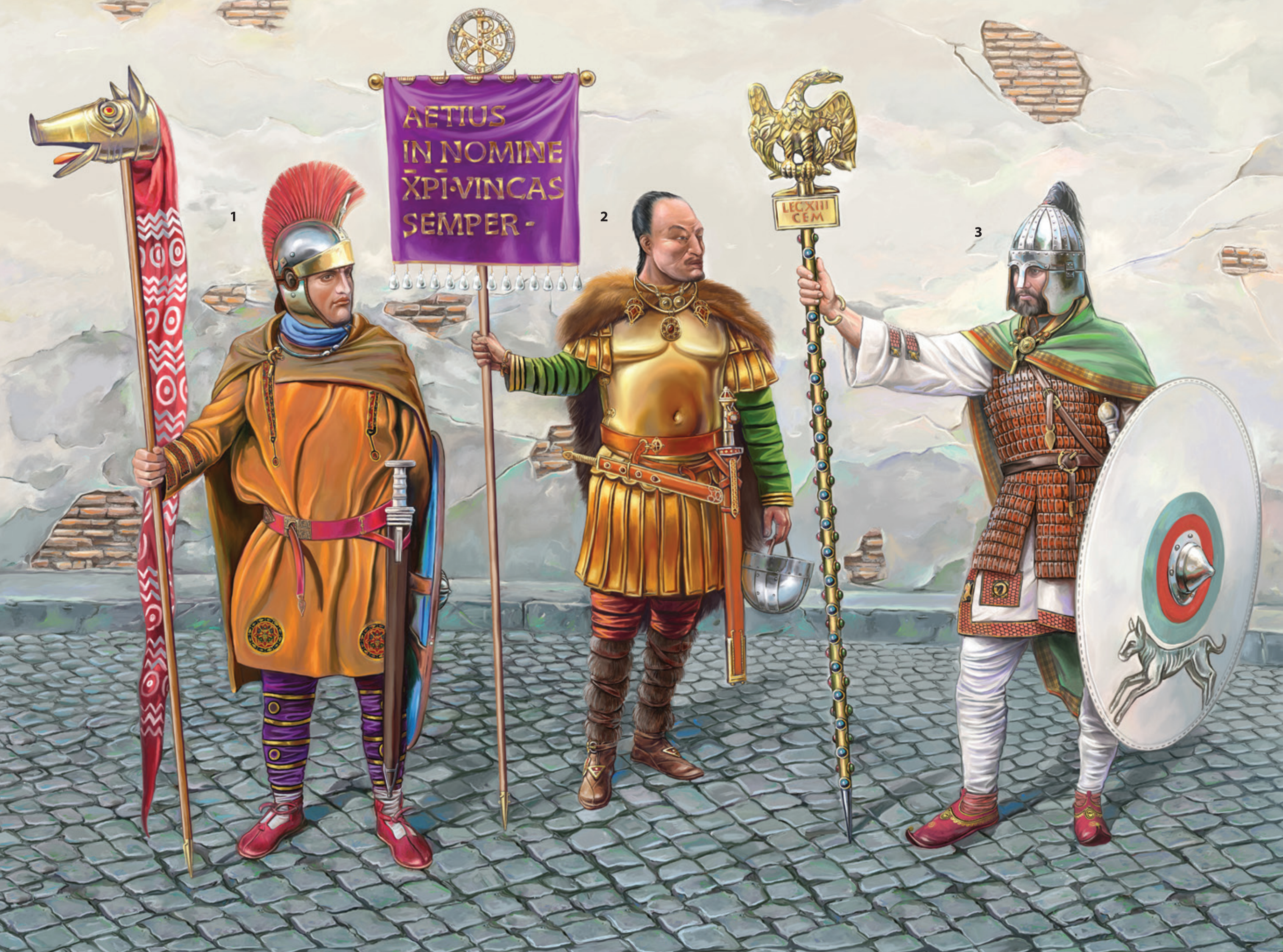
This soldier from one of the coastal garrisons on the *Litor Saxonici* ('Saxon Shore') wears a long-sleeved *tunica militaris*, tight *anaxyrida* trousers and a *sagum* cloak. He is copied from the famous manuscript of Vergilius Romanus, which some scholars believe was realized in Britannia. The *Notitia Dignitatum* shows the shield blazon of a Legio Secunda Britannica as a red eight-spoked wheel design on a light ground (illustrated in MAA 154, *Arthur and the Anglo-Saxon Wars*, as Plate A4). The *draco* head is copied from the specimen found at Deskford in Scotland, which was originally identified as part of a *carnyx* Celtic trumpet. However, it is made almost entirely of brass (copper alloy), which was used almost exclusively by the Romans and strictly controlled by them, and the size and shape of the Deskford find strongly suggest a *draco* head. While the helmet is of pseudo-Attic typology, the belt and *spatha* are reconstructed from finds excavated at Richborough.

(2) Hunnic *vexillarius* of *buccellarii*; Gallia, AD 451

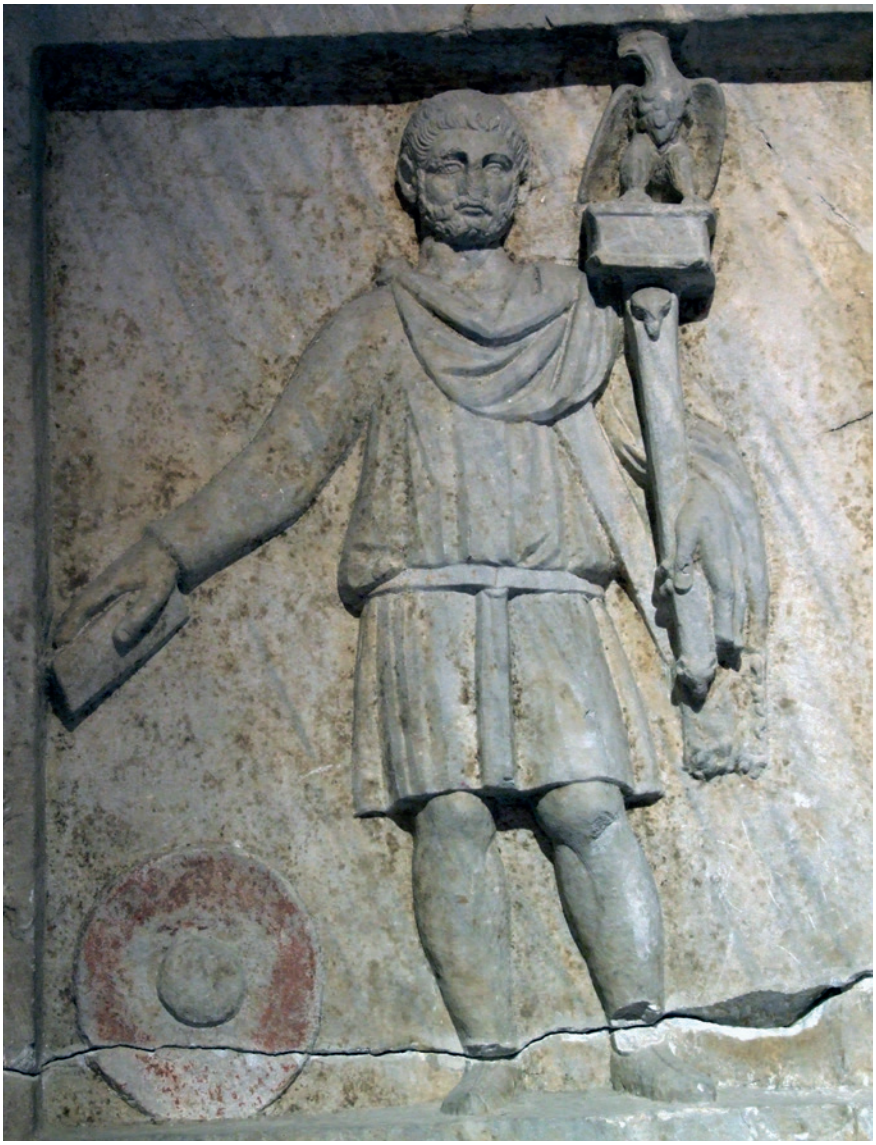
Counter-intuitive though it is, this Hun mercenary serving in Gallia under the Magister Militum, Aetius, holds the holy standard of the Empire: a purple *labarum* surmounted by the Christian monogram, which we copy from the Dyptich of Honorius. The *bucellarii* or 'biscuit–eaters' were personal escorts for leading figures; recruited from Goths, Huns and Persians, among other 'barbarian' peoples, they were highly paid and well equipped. His armour and ornaments are a mixture of Roman and barbarian items. His *Bandenhelm* is similar to specimens from Sveti Vid, Croatia, and his long sword and shorter 'semi-*spatha*' are decorated in the cloisonné style of Constantinople wokshops.

(3) *Aquilifer* of *Legio XIII Gemina*; Babylon fortress, Egypt

The equipment of this man is entirely reconstructed from recovered 5th-century artefacts and documentary sources: the Leiden *Spangenhelm*; leather scale armour from Karanis, Egypt, worn over a decorated Coptic-style tunic from a specimen recently found in Egypt; a 'semi-*spatha*' sword; and the *aquila* standard from the fortress of Babylon in present-day Cairo. The shield *deigmaton* is copied from one related to the 'Tertiodecimani' in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which expressly lists Legio XIII Gemina as garrisoning the fortress of Babylon.


1
2
3
AETIUS
IN NOMINE
XPI·VINCAS
SEMPER -
LEGXIII
GEM

The funerary stele of Titus Flavius Surillio, *aquilifer* of *Legio II Adiutrix Pia Fidelis*, AD 214, from Byzantium. See reconstruction as Plate A2, and note that the round shield shown to the left of the figure still has traces of red paint. The quality of the stone and the carving are both good enough to have preserved crisp details of his bearded face, the drape of his tunic and *sagum* cloak, and the eagle standard itself – illustrated in closer detail on pages 9 & 10. (Archaeological Museum, Istanbul; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum)



For the 3rd–4th centuries the ranks of commanders and 'non-commissioned' officers can be summarized as follows: after the territorial *dux* and the unit's *tribunus* the senior officer was the *senator*, found in *scholae* (4th century) and infantry units. Next in order came the *ducenarius* (commander of 200 men – Vegetius, II, 8); the *centurio* in the old-style units, or *centenarius* (commander of 100 men – the latter in *scholae*, and 'ducal' troops of infantry and cavalry such as *cataphractarii* and *sagittarii*); the *biarchus*; and the *circitor*. Among unit standard-bearers, the senior was the cohort's *draconarius*; below him were the *signiferi* or *signarii* and the *semeiophori*, carrying purple *vexilla* embroidered in gold with the Imperial *imagines*, or, at least until the mid-4th century, Imperial busts in silver mounted upon staffs. Finally the *campidoctor*, a long-service soldier acting as master-of-arms for the new recruits, was a post attested from the reign of Alexander Severus (AD 222–235).

Urbaniciani and *Vigiles*

For the Urban cohorts in Rome, we have clear evidence of *imaginiferi* in AD 202 (CIL, VI, 618 – T. Tussanius Restitutus, *imaginifer* of XII Cohors Urbana). He is the only *imaginifer* recorded in either Praetorian or Urban cohorts, although the post is found in the Vigiles. This was possibly a 3rd-century introduction, perhaps resulting from the transfer of legionaries into such units in the last decade of the 2nd century.

Imaginiferi appear in Roman epigraphic sources related to the Vigiles (CIL,VI, 1056ff.) in two different abbreviations: '*IMA*' and '*IMC*' (CIL,VI, 1057, AD 205 or 210), mentioned once and twice respectively, and an '*IMC*' appears again in CIL,VI, 1058. Domaszewski supports the interpretation of *IMA* as *imaginifer Augusti* and *IMC* as *imaginifer Caesaris*, on the basis that in the reign of Septimius Severus the *imagines* of one Augustus and two Caesars would have had to be carried. However, he ignores the fact that Caracalla was made Augustus in AD 198 and Geta in 209; consequently, Breeze prefers to interpret both abbreviations as referring simply to *imaginifer*, pointing out that this term, without qualification, appears on the roll of the First Cohort of Vigiles in AD 205 as being held by an unknown number of soldiers, but in excess of three.

Duties and career

The essential duties of the standard-bearers had not changed markedly since the Early Empire: to carry the raised standards on parade, in religious ceremonies and on the march; to act as a focal point for the soldiers on the battlefield; and to stand near the commander, along with the musicians, in order to transmit his orders visually by movements of the *signa*.

They were also responsible for carrying out some administrative functions, of which probably the most important was to receive money deposited by the soldiers, to be kept securely *apud signa* ('near the standards'). According to Vegetius (II, 20), the *signiferi* were chosen not just for their trustworthiness but also for their literacy, so that they could maintain the accounts of this banking system on behalf of their comrades.

Appointment to the position of standard-bearer was coveted, and surviving sources indicate that they enjoyed a high status. The *draconarius* was chosen from among the bravest and most experienced soldiers, who had been awarded gold necklaces (*torques*). In the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius we read that these were decorations given to the most courageous men in recognition of wounds suffered in battle ('*aureos auferte torques, praemia sauciorum*'). Although Ammianus, describing the crowning of the Emperor Julian (*Hist.*, XX, 4, 18), writes that 'a man called Maurus... then a standard-bearer of the Petulantes, took off the torque which he wore as carrier of the dragon and boldly placed it on Julian's head', in fact Maurus would not have received a torque by virtue of his position, but would have been appointed a dragon-bearer by virtue of his proven gallantry in action.

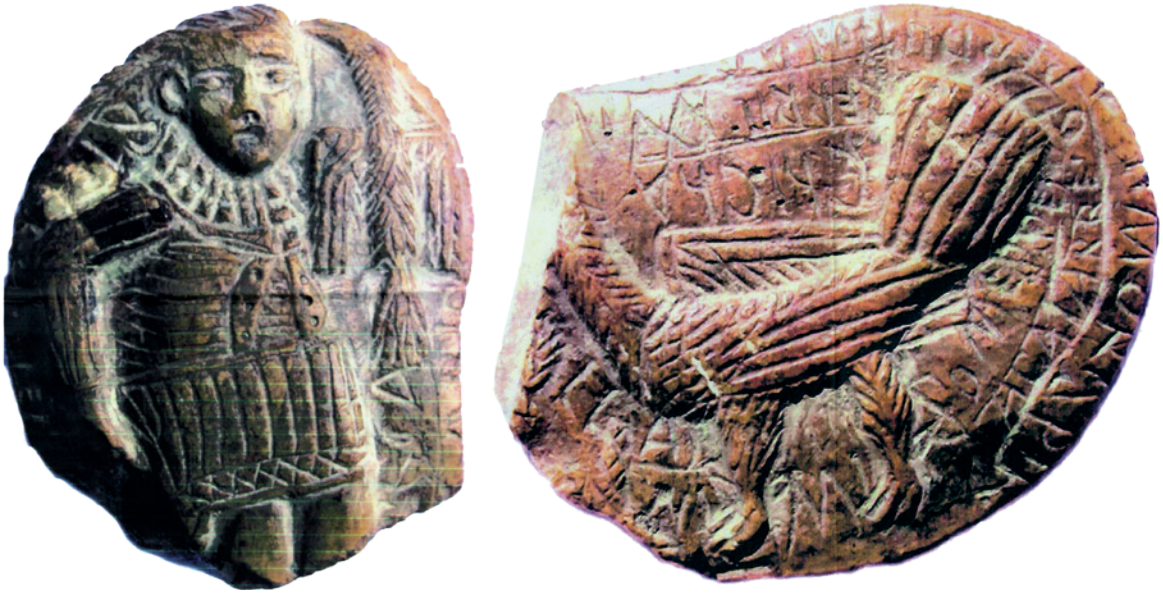
There are mentions of a superior appointment of *magister draconum* in two sources. One is a 5th-century inscription from Prusias ad Hypium (Bithynia), naming one Georgios as *magister draconum* of a *schola* stationed there. The other is in the poem *Peristephanon* by Prudentius (I, 33), which names Emeterius and Chelidonius as two *draconarii* martyred in the early 4th century for their Christian faith. Their superiors are called *magistri signorum*, a rank corresponding to the *magister draconum* of the later inscription from Prusias (see above, on the change of rank title during the 4th century). Taken together, these sources reveal the existence of a 'master of standard/ dragon-bearers' by AD 400 at the latest. It is not clear if this title indicated simply the 'first among equals' of a *collegium* or 'club' of *draconarii*, or if he fulfilled the function of training them in peacetime and directing them in battle.

The *signiferi* formed part of the hierarchy of 'non-commissioned' officers known as *principales*. It was natural for a 'non-com' of inferior grade to wish to rise to *signifer*'s rank, and subsequently to higher rank among the standard-bearers or even to higher positions. Promotion from *optio* and *signifer* to *centurio* was possible, and the post of *aquilifer* must have been one of the most senior ranks below the centurionate. As is to be expected, many recorded *aquiliferi* all had at least 14 years of service (e.g. CIL, VI, 3627, Marcus Sempronius Celer, *aquilifer* of Legio X Fretensis, Rome, 49 years old; CIL VIII, 2991, Publius Valerius, *aquilifer*, 50 years old; CIL, VIII, 2794, Publius Aelius Vitalis, *aquilifer* of Legio III Augusta, Lambaesis, 45 years old; CIL, VIII, 2796, Aemilius Demetrianus, *aquilifer*, Lambaesis, 32 years old).

Among eagle-bearers known to have retired in that rank, in CIL, III, 4231 we find Aurelius Cupitus, *veteranus ex aquilifer* Legio I Adiutrix, who may have been unusual in having retired so poor ('*miserabilis*') that his parents had to provide his funeral expenses. However, it is striking that on the whole the pay of the *imaginiferi* (CIL, XIII, 8607) was higher than that of the *aquiliferi*. We might speculate that this might have been to compensate for the fact that in the legions the post of *imaginifer* was not such a good springboard to the centurionate as that of *aquilifer*, and that the careers of image-bearers tended to stagnate in that rank; for instance, CIL, VIII, 2971 records that in AD 229–230 Sallustivus Ianuarius of Legio III Augusta died as an *imaginifer* at 50 years old. By contrast, some in the Vigiles seem to have been younger soldiers who occupied the post only briefly before progressing to higher things. Examples are C. Rasinius Ianuarius, an *imaginifer* of Vigiles in AD 205, who rose to *cornicularius praefecti* in 210; and C. Iulius Zoticus, also an *imaginifer* of Vigiles in 205, who was promoted to a*quilifer* five years later.

Clothing and armour

During the Late Roman period the dress of standard-bearers was largely the same as that of their fellow soldiers, perhaps with some differences related to rank or wealth. Examples from the 3rd century include Antonius Valens, *vexillarius* of II Cohors Sardorum (Equitata), stationed at ad Rapidum (Mauretania Tingitana), who is dressed in a short tunic, covered by a second even shorter and pleated garment, and by a *pallium* (wide cloak) worn on the right side of the body. The uniform of the *vexillarius* in the Terentius painting from Dura Europos is the usual long-sleeved, belted tunic, off-white in colour, worn with dark breeches, a sword on a baldric, and a brownish cloak draped in the same manner. Gravestones such as those of Felsonius Verus of Legio II Parthica at Apamea in Syria, and Titus Flavius Surillio of Legio II Adiutrix in Turkey, usually depict *signiferi* as bare-headed. The same can be said for the 4th century, both for cavalry and infantry. The cavalry *draconarii* on the Arch of Constantine are dressed like the other marching troops, with long-sleeved tunics, and either tight-fitting trousers (*anaxyrida*) or *tibiales*, with closed *calcei* or open *carbatinae* boots.



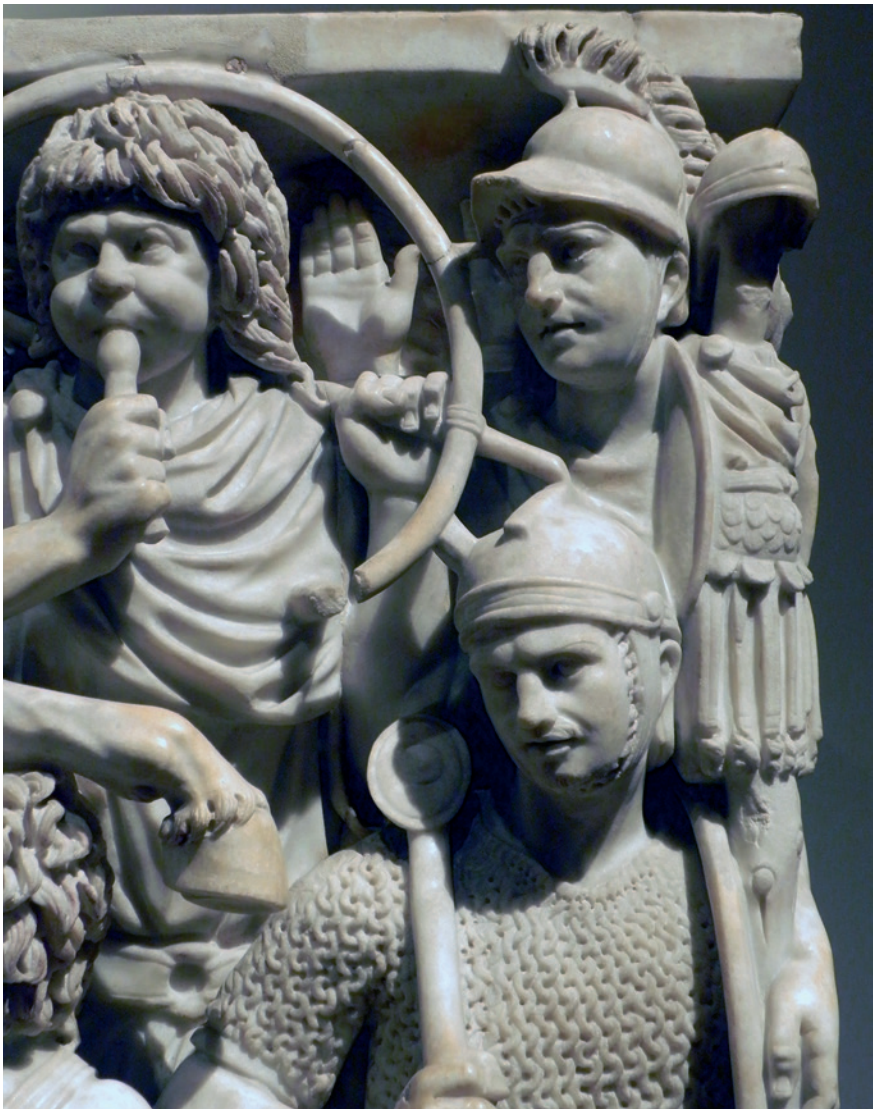
Moulded terracotta plaque, early 3rd century, from excavations in north-east Italy; see attempted reconstruction as Plate B1. The figure is an *aquilifer*, who seems to be wearing a *lorica segmentata* cuirass of Sarmatian typology, over padded and quilted garments; the paws of a leonine pelt are knotted on the breast. On the rear surface is an unusual image of the *aquila* itself, seen from its left side. (Photos courtesy Dr Enrico Cirelli)

While the images of 3rd–4th century *draconarii* in pictorial sources are often unclear, it is possible that some of them, following earlier Roman tradition, wore masked helmets protecting the face, and sometimes also animal (bear?) pelts covering the helmet, especially in the Western provinces. Although the iconographic record shows this latter distinction as early as the 1st century AD, the earliest written reference to it, specifically in relation to previous centuries, is in fact found in Vegetius (II, 16) in the late 300s: ‘All *antesignani* and standard-bearers, although infantry, received small cuirasses, and helmets covered with bear skins (*ursinis pellibus*) to frighten the enemy’. Although Vegetius mentions *antesignani* (II, 7, 16) – ‘those in front of the standards’ – he gives very little information about their role, beyond the fact that they defended the standards, and wore lighter armour and bear skins like the *signiferi*. Perhaps they formed what in more recent centuries we would call a ‘colour-guard’?

In Vegetius’s own day it seems that not all soldiers, including the *draconarii* and other *signiferi*, wore armour and helmets, and he complains about this practice followed in some units: ‘What are the dragon-bearers themselves and the standard-bearers to do in battle, who control the poles with the left hand, and whose heads and chests are obviously unprotected?’ (I, 20). The iconography of the 4th–5th centuries does sometimes show standard-bearers well protected (e.g. cavalry *draconarii* in the Al-Bagawat frescoes, and the *flamoularios* in the Argos mosaic, both 5th century), but sometimes in tunic and trousers with only a helmet and shield (*draconarii* on the copper-alloy box panel from Ságvár, Hungary, second half of 4th century). The degree of protection probably depended on the unit, the particular time and circumstances, and simple availability: in periods of crisis units presumably had to equip themselves as well as was practically possible, which might vary.

By contrast, protective equipment is clearly visible in the iconography of the 3rd and the first half of the 4th century. A cavalry *vexillarius* from Chester (Britannia) is sculpted on his gravestone wearing a crested helmet with a pointed peak above the nose, which reminds us of the Kalkar

Hönepel or Bodengraven models (Robinson's 'Auxiliary Cavalry Types F and H'). The Cervianus *phalera* from Britannia in the second half of the 3rd century shows troops including infantry *vexillarii* wearing similar helmets with angled peaks. When soldiers are represented in armour, *signiferi* wear the same helmet as their comrades. This might be either the segmented *Spangenhelm*; or (as on the Arch of Galerius) a conical type; or (as the standard-bearers of the always-conservative Praetorian Guard on the pilasters of the Arch of Constantine) pseudo-Attic helmets – one of them visibly embossed on the side with the image of a ram. A single exception from the Arch's pilasters seems to confirm the authenticity of representations by Late Roman sculptors: the bearer of the Winged Victory standard wears an Intercisa-Dunapentele style 'ridge' helmet of Romano-Sassanian typology. All the *signiferi* in the frieze of the Arch wear pseudo-Attic helmets, including the bearer of the *labarum*. The *flamoularios* in the Argos mosaic wears a *Bandenhelm* resembling the Sveti Vid (Narona) Type III specimen from Croatia; and the *draconarii*



Often misinterpreted because of damage to undercarved details on the remarkable Ludovisi Sarcophagus, the lower right-hand figure in fact depicts a *signifer* of *c.* AD 260. Leaning against his right shoulder, the broken staff of his standard can be traced upwards from the visible *phalera* to its surmounting right hand inside the curl of the *cornicen*'s horn. His ringmail armour corresponds with an actual specimen recently discovered at Novae in Bulgaria. To the right, note the *insignia triumphi*; and at upper left, a horn-player wearing an animal pelt is blowing a signal-call. This reminds us of the close association of musicians and standard-bearers in the tactical chain of command: the former sounded orders to the latter, who passed them on to the troops by movements of their *signa*. (Palazzo Altemps, Rome; author's photo, courtesy of the Museum) on the copper-alloy box panel from Hungary seem to wear a crested version of the Intercisa-Dunapentele type. The cavalry *draconarii* in the Al-Bagawat frescoes show a helmet of Phrygian shape, probably a local evolution of 3rd-century models like the example from Vienne, France, today preserved in the Lugdunum Museum, in Lyon.

The expression *loricae minores* used by Vegetius in reference to the armour of *signiferi* in former times does not mean that they were unarmoured, but that they wore lighter armour in comparison to other troop types, which he describes in the same passage (*triarii* and *catafracti*). We may associate these *loricae minores* with examples from the iconography of the 3rd–4th centuries: ringmail, scale armour, plates covering the chest, leather corselets, and various types of composite armours. The *signifer* carrying the centurial *signum* on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus (opposite) shows a beautiful depiction of mail armour, together with a pseudo-Attic helmet and a round shield.

There are several exceptions, however. A 3rd-century *aquilifer* represented on a terracotta medallion shows a *lorica segmentata*, in combination with a padded *subarmalis* worn over a second padded garment, and has a lion skin knotted on his breast. 'Muscled' armour (the *thorax statos*) is worn by all eight *signiferi* – probably of the Imperial Guard – on the pedestals of the Arch of Constantine, and also by the *signifer* carrying an *insignia triumphi* on the Arch of Galerius. On the latter monument the words of Vegetius are completely contradicted by the heavy scale-armour *squama catafracta* worn by *draconarii* of the Herculiani and Ioviani legions. In the second half of the 5th century the *flamoularios* in the Argos mosaic is again protected by muscled armour, worn over a padded *thoracomacus*.

Shields are invariably shown as round or oval, and follow those of the ordinary *milites*. The shape and apparent dimensions of the 4th-century shields of Felix, *signifer* of the Numerus Divitensium from Budapest, and of Lepontius from Gaul, recall specimens dated to the 4th–6th centuries recently found in Fayoum, Egypt.

Weapons

Standard-bearers are usually depicted with a long *spatha* or shorter 'semi-*spatha*' sword slung at their left side, from a baldric and/or from a *cingulum* around the waist. Interestingly, one of the Praetorian *signiferi* on the pilasters of the Arch of Constantine is both armed with an eagle-pommel sword and has a composite bow lying near him.

A common find in Late Roman graves associated with standard spearheads is an axe or a pointed war-hammer. The grave of an unidentified 4th-century *signifer* found near Tirana (Albania) yielded an iron spearhead with side-wings, a knife and a battle-axe. The same is true of the discoveries on the Aventine Hill in Rome, where a slim battle-axe and a pickaxe-shaped hammer were found together with the remains of the *vexilla/labara* described above (see '*Signa Imperii*'). Beside the wonderfully decorated winged spearhead from the famous grave at Vermand (see above, 'Spearheads'), where a Romano-Germanic or Romano-Sarmatian officer was buried at the beginning of the 5th century, finds included a sword, an iron axe head of *francisca* type, and ten small javelin-heads.

We should also consider the possibility that the spearhead surmounting many *vexilla* standards could itself be employed as a thrusting-spear by an expert warrior, fighting either on foot or on horseback. The ‘winged’ form characteristic of many of these standard-heads might not only have been for the attachment of flag-cords, but also to prevent the blade penetrating too far into an enemy’s body, like the classic ‘boar-spear’ design.

The chapel of the standards

In peacetime the standards and other emblems of the units were kept and worshipped in *sacella* or chapels in their forts and fortresses, and in military camps on campaign the *sacellum* or *scrinium* was duplicated ‘under canvas’. Herodian (*Rom. Hist.*, IV, 4, 5) describes a dramatic incident when, ‘Rushing into the camp and into the temple where the standards (*semeia*) and decorations (*agalmata*) of the guard (*stratopedou*) were worshipped, Caracalla threw himself on the ground; in the chapel, he gave thanks and offered sacrifices for his safety’. The images of military deities kept with the standards in these sanctuaries included Mars Pater and, from Diocletian’s reign (AD 284–305), the *genius castrorum*. According to a Coptic account of the execution of 40 martyrs at Sebaste, the Legio Melitena Fulminata was for the most part Christian, so its *sacellum* of the *signa* should have included an image of Christ.

According to Vegetius (II, 20), in a strongroom near the *sacellum* the soldiers deposited half of the donatives they received; by the late 4th century AD these bounties distributed on Imperial birthdays and accession days seem to have completely eclipsed the annual *stipendium*, which was by now of negligible value. In AD 193, when he doubled the strength of his horse guard unit (the Equites Singulares), Septimius Severus had a New Fort (*Castra Nova*) built in Rome. Its central headquarters building consisted of a main hall, a chapel of the standards entered by steps of green marble, an underground strongroom for storing treasure, and four offices. Constantine’s

H

ROMAN STANDARDS, 3rd–4th CENTURIES AD

(1) *Aquila* of *Legio II Parthica Gordiana Pia Fidelis Aeterna*, AD 242–244

Reconstructed from the stele of Felsonius Verus from Apamea, Syria. Note the box to protect the eagle during transport.

(2) Imperial or Praetorian *signum* of reign of Galerius, AD 305–306

From a carving on a pilaster at the East Gate of the palace of Felix Romuliana, Serbia. The dual portraits, with the left-hand figure slightly larger, presumably depict the *Augusti* and *Caesares*, of the Second Tetrarchy. These were (East, and senior) Galerius and Maximinus Daia, headquartered at present-day Izmit in Turkey and Sremska Mitrovica, near Belgrade in Sebia, respectively; and (West) Constantius Chlorus and Severus II, headquartered at Milan, Italy and Trier, German Rhineland.

(3) Imperial or Praetorian *signum*, *c.* AD 286–305

This is reconstructed from a painting at the entrance to the Villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina, Sicily. Dating from the First Tetrarchy (see commentary Plate D), it presumably displays *imagines* of Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus.

(4) *Draco*

Reconstructed from Arch of Galerius, with head of Niederbieber type.

(5) *Draco*

Reconstructed from description by Ammianus Marcellinus, with head from the Carnuntum miniature.

(6) Standard of a *centuria*, reign of the Gordians, AD 238–244

Surmounted by the traditional hand symbol on a crosspiece with pendants, this is decorated with a wreath with hanging ribbons, a *phalera*, a *lunula*, and two perhaps metal *tufae*, and has two downturned handles at the bottom.

In AD 238 – the ‘Year of the Six Emperors’, early in the long 3rd-century period of anarchy – Gordian I and his son and co-emperor Gordian II rebelled in Africa against the unpopular Emperor Maximinus Thrax. Although endorsed by the Senate and some other provinces, after only some three weeks they were defeated near Carthage and both died. Gordian I’s grandson by his daughter Antonia Gordiana reigned as Gordian III from 238 to 244.

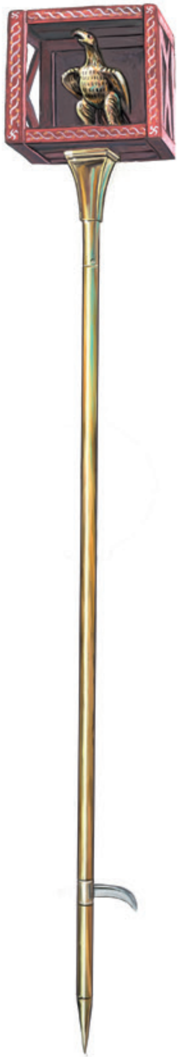
(7) *Labarum* of Emperor Julian, AD 363

During the reign of Julian ‘the Apostate’, Christian symbolism was replaced with other emblems; the inscription on this flag invokes the *Sol Invictus*, the ‘Unconquered Sun’.

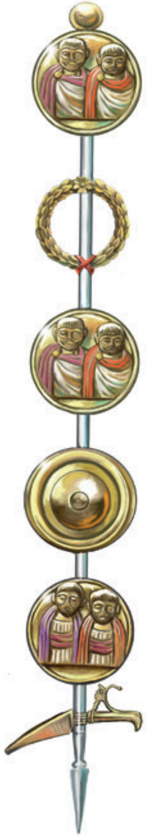
(8) *Insignia triumphi*, AD 298

Reconstructed from the Arch of Galerius**.** For centuries it was traditional to mount *spolia* – panoplies of captured enemy helmets, armour and sometimes weapons (here Sarmatian) – on crossed or T-shaped poles, and to parade them in triumphal processions and celebratory ceremonies.

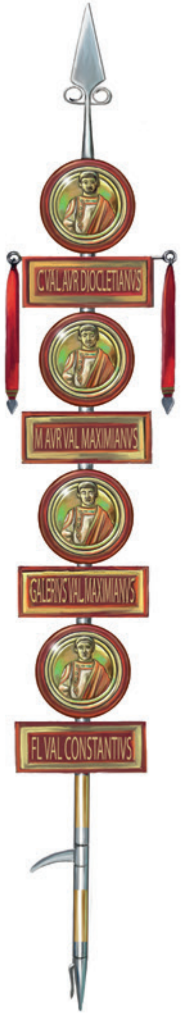
1



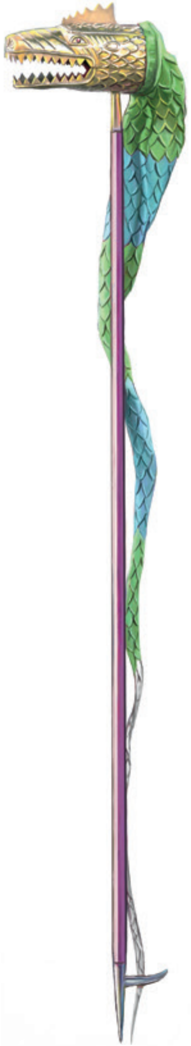
2



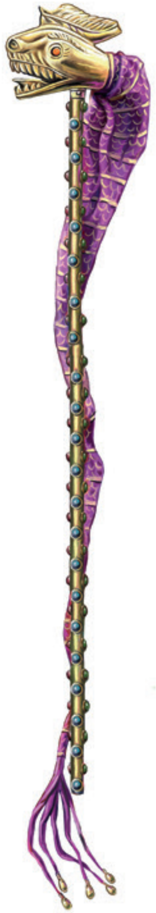
3


C VAL AVR DIOCLETIANVS
M AVR VAL MAXIMIANVS
GALERIVS VAL MAXIMIANVS
FL VAL CONSTANTIVS

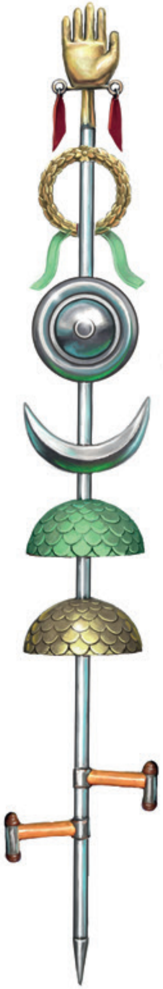
4



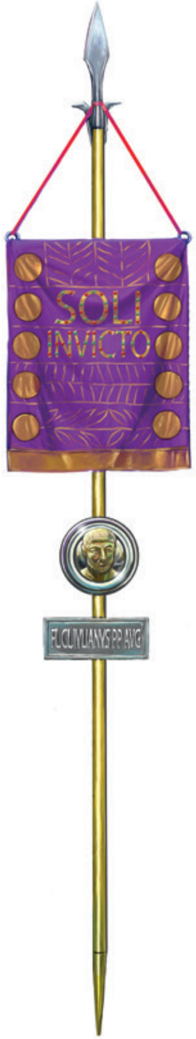
5



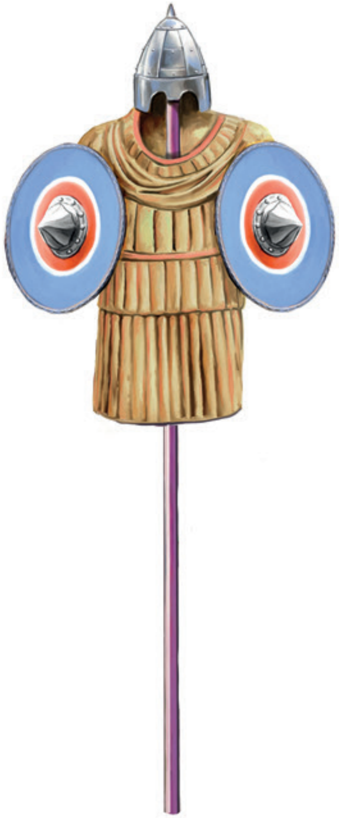
6



7


SOLI
INVICTO
FL CL IVLIANVS PP AVG

8



razing of the New Fort after AD 312 was symbolic, and so was the placing of Rome's principal church, the Basilica of St John Lateran, on top of the former Guard's chapel of the standards.

When not in the field, the standards were kept in special protective boxes. One of these, shaped like a cage, is visible on the gravestone from Apamea of *aquilifer* Felsonius Verus of Legio II Parthica Gordiana Pia Fidelis (reconstructed as Plate H1).

Tactical employment of standards on the battlefield

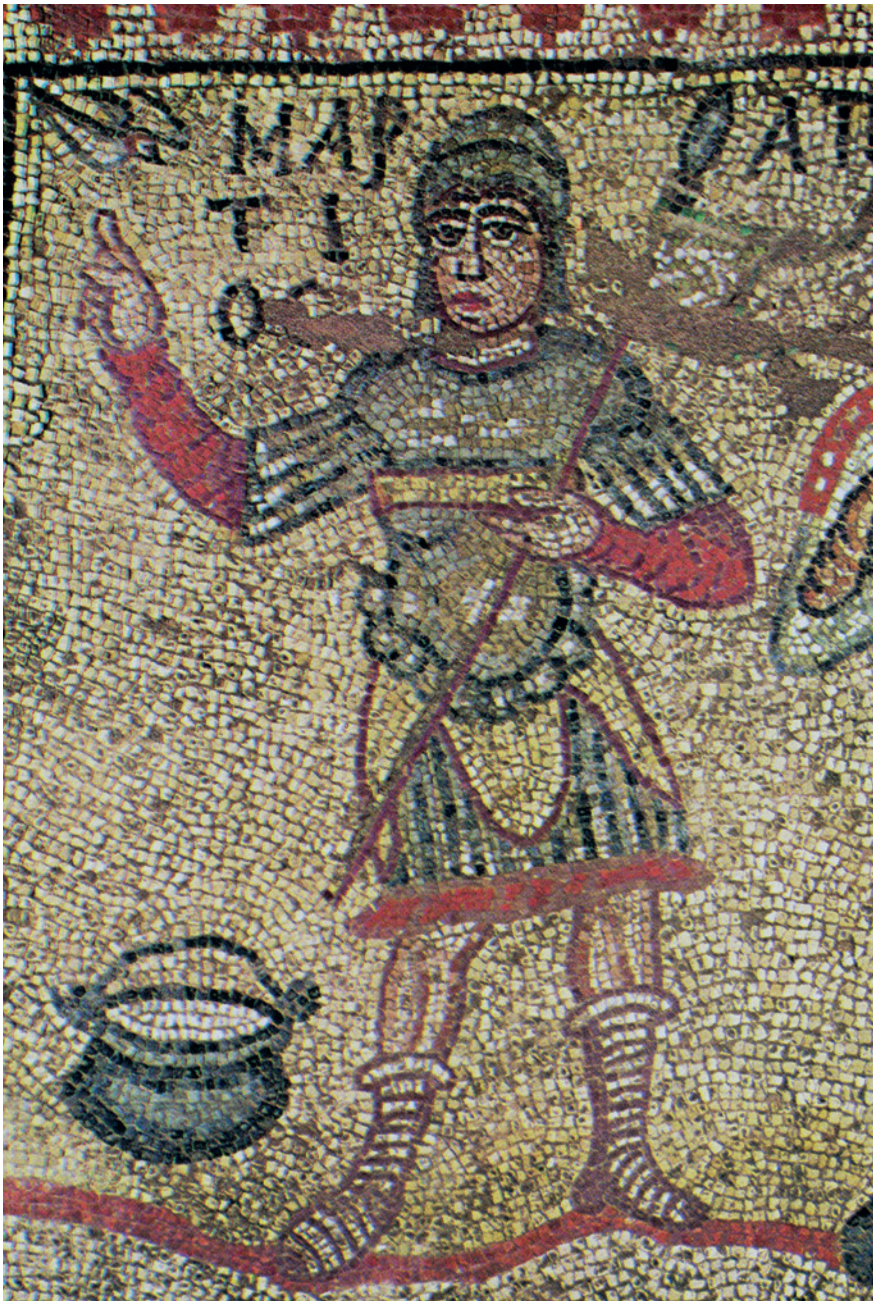
The ancient custom of marking the opening of war operations by erecting a pole with a red *vexillum* in front of the the commander's tent survived into the Late Empire. It was undoubtedly the same type of standard which, once the army was ranged for battle, signalled the opening of hostilities, this signal being relayed by the trumpeters. Ammianus Marcellinus testifies to this in the 4th century, in his narration of a battle led by Valentinian (*Hist.*, XXVII, 10, 9): 'At once our standards (*signa*) were planted in the usual manner, while everywhere the call to arms was sounded; but, at the command of the emperor and his generals, the well-disciplined soldiers stood fast, waiting for the raising of the banner (*vexillum*), which was the signal that it was the fit time to begin the battle'.

The tactical importance of the standards did not diminish in the Late Empire. It is clear from passages of Vegetius (II, 13) and Ammianus Marcellinus (*Hist.*, XVI, 12, 39) that they served as rallying points for the troops. Vegetius (II, 22) explains clearly the function of the standards on the battlefield, in combination with the calls sounded by the hornists and trumpeters:

'The trumpeter calls soldiers to battle, and again sounds for a retreat. When hornblowers sound, it is not the soldiers as such but the standard [-bearers] that obey their signal. So when soldiers alone are due to go out to do some work, the trumpeters sound... When the standards are moved, or, once moved, are to be planted, the hornblowers sound... But when there is to be a battle, both trumpeters and hornblowers sound together... The signals are observed in all exercises and marches, so that soldiers may obey more readily in actual battle, if ordered by the leaders to fight, stand their ground, pursue or retire.'

This passage requires no further explanation, since it clarifies the exercise of Roman tactical discipline in battle: soldiers followed the separate and/or combined signals by musical calls, and movements of the standards (*muta signa*), to coordinate their responses to commanders' orders. The famous *draco* had other practical functions besides identifying the cohort, as stated by Vegetius. It too must have been used to signal orders, and the presence of the *draconarius* beside a charging cavalry commander is already visible on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus in the mid-3rd century AD. For the horse-archers who were prominent among the Late Roman cavalry, observing the movement of its 'windsock' tail when halted must also have enabled them to adjust their aim.

Standards shining with gold and precious stones signalled the presence of the emperor himself, and Ammianus notes the importance this could have at a moment of crisis (*Hist.*, XVI, 12): 'When Caesar had seen from a distance that the cavalry were looking for nothing except safety in flight, he spurred on his horse and held them back like a kind of barrier. On recognizing him by the purple ensign of a dragon, fitted to the top of a very



Personification of the month of March as a Roman *flamoularios* (Greek spelling), from the mosaic floor of the East House, Argos, last quarter of 5th century AD. (Argos Archaeological Museum; author's photo 1980, courtesy of the Museum)

long lance and spreading out like the skin of a serpent (*purpureum signum draconis, summitati hastae longioris aptatum velut senectutis pendentis exuvias*), the tribune of one of the squadrons stopped, and… rode back to renew the battle.'

Thus we have seen that Roman standards of the Late Empire continued to fulfill the four traditional functions of ancient (and later) war-banners: to embody for the soldiers a religious sense of national and unit identity; to identify the position of the commander; to mark the location of units or detachments in the ranks of the battle-array; and to signal movement orders.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANCIENT SOURCES

(Abbreviations: LCL = Loeb Classical Library, HUP = Harvard University Press. Bracketed abbreviated forms of author's names or works are those used for the in-text references, e.g. Amm. Marc. = Ammianus Marcellinus; *Hist.* = *The Histories*/ Latin, *Res Gestae*.)

Ambrose of Milan, *Political Letters and Speeches* (Translated Texts for Historians 43, ed. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz; Liverpool University Press, 2005)

Ammianus Marcellinus (Amm. Marc.), *The Histories/ Res Gestae* (*Hist.*) (Latin text & English translation by J.C. Rolfe; LCL, 3 vols; London, 1939–50)

Cassius Dio, *Roman History/Romaika* (*Rom.*) (ed. E. Cary; LCL, 9 vols; HUP, 1914–27)

Claudianus, I–II (ed. G.P. Goold; LCL, 2 vols; Cambridge, 1922 & 1990)

Codex Theodosianus (Cod. Th.), 2 vols; Latin text in *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis* (ed. Th. Mommsen, P.M. Meyer, P. Krueger; Berolini, Berlin, 1954–62)

Corpus inscriptionum latinarum (*CIL*) (*Consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae editum;* 17 vols; Berlin, 1862–1925)

Corpus inscriptionum latinarum, auctarium (New series; index vols 2 & 3; de Gruyter, Berlin, 2003)

Ephemeris Epigraphica, Corporis Inscriptionum Latinarum, supplementum, vol 4 (Rome, 1875)

Eusebius, V*ita Constantini* (ed. L.A. Heikel; *Werke I, Die Griechischen Christliche Schrifteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte,* 7; Leipzig-Berlin, 1902)

Festus, *Sexti pompei festi de verborum significatione quae supersunt cum Pauli epitome...* (ed. K.O. Muller; Leipzig, 1880)

'Gregorii Nazianzani opera omnia', in Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, *Series Graeca*, vols 35–38 (Paris, 1857–66)

Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Gregory Nazianzen's two invectives and Libanius's monody with Julians's extant theosophical works* (London, 1888)

Ioannis Lydi, *De Magistratibus Populi Romani*, *Libri Tres* (ed. R. Wunsch; Leipzig, 1903)

Isidorus of Seville, *Etimologiae* (*Et.*); *Isidori Hispanensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* (2 vols, ed. W.M. Lindsay; Oxford, 1911)

Macrobius (ed. F. Eyssenhardt; Leipzig, 1893)

Macrobius, *The Saturnalia* (ed. P. Vaughan Davies; London–New York, 1969)

Prudentius, *Psycomachie*, *contro Symmache* (ed. M. Lavarenne; Paris, 1948 & 1963)

Scriptores Historiae Augustae (SHA), Latin & English text in *Historia Augusta* (LCL, 3 vols; HUP, 1921–32)

Fragment of miniature representation of a centurial *signum*, early 3rd century AD. (European private collection; photo courtesy Dr Fabrizio Casprini)

Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen* (Merchantville, 2018)
Sozomenos Hermias, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, in *Migne Patrologia Greca*, PG 0067 (Paris, 1864, col. 0350–0450)
Vegetius, (Veg.), *Epitome of Military Science / Epitoma Rei Militaris* (*Epit.*) (ed. N.P. Milner; Liverpool, 1996)
Wace, H. & P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York, 1912)
Zosimus, *New History* (ed. R.T. Ridley; Canberra, 1982 & 2006)

MODERN SOURCES

Alexandrescu, C.G., ‘A contribution on the standards of the Roman Army’, Limes XIX, Procedings of the XIXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Pécs, 2005), pp. 147–151
Alföldi, A. ‘Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser’, in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung* 50 (1935), pp. 1–171
Alföldi, A., ‘Hasta-Summa Imperii: The Spear as Embodiment of Sovereignty in Rome’ in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 63, No. 1 (Jan. 1959), pp. 1–27
Alföldi, M. R., ‘Das labarum auf römischen Münzen’, in H. Bellen & H.M. Von Kaenel (eds.), *Gloria Romanorum, Schriften zur Spätantike zum 75. Geburtstag der Verfasserin am 6. Juni 2001* (Stuttgart, 2001) pp. 270–287
Arce J., ‘A Roman Bronze Standard from Pollentia (Mallorca) and the Collegia Iuvenum’, in *Toreutik und figürliche Bronzen römischer Zeit. Akten der 6. Tagung über antike Bronzen, Berlin 1980* (Berlin, 1984), pp. 33–40
Babuin, A., ‘Standards and Insignia of Byzantium’, in *Byzantion*, 71, 1 (2001), pp. 7–59
Beutler, F., Farka, C., Gugl, C., Humer, F., Kremer, G. & Polihammer, E., *Der Adlers Roms, Carnuntum und die Armee der Cäsaren* (Bad Vöslau, 2017)
Bianchi-Bandinelli, R., *L’arte Romana al centro del potere* (Milan, 1969–77)
Birley, E., ‘The Religion of the Roman Army’, in *ANRW*, 2, 16, 2 (1978), pp. 1506–1541
Bishop, M. C. & J.C.N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment, from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (London, 1993 & Exeter, 2006)
Born, H. & M. Junkelmann, *Römische Kampf und Turnierrüstungen* (Sammlung Axel Guttmann 6; Mainz, 1997)
Borromeo, G., *Roman Small-scale Portrait Busts* (dissertation, Brown University, Providence, RI; 1993)
Breeze, D. J., *The Immunes and Principales of the Roman Army* (Durham University, 1969)
Brilliant, R., ‘The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum’, in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Vol XXIX* (Rome, 1967)
Carandini, A., Ricci, A. & De Vos, M., *Filosofiana. The Villa of Piazza Amerina* (Palermo, 1982)
Ciarrocchi, B. & M. Ricci, ‘I Materiali, dati per l’elaborazione di un profilo storico dell’Aventino’ in Capodiferro, A., Mignone, L.M. & Quaranta, P., *Studi e scavi sull’Aventino, 2003–2015* (Rome, 2017), pp. 171–243
Clauss, M., ‘Heerwesen (Heeres religion)’, in *Reallex. Ant. Chr.*, 13 (1986), pp.1089–1090

Connolly, P., *Greece and Rome at War* (London, 1988)

Coulston, J.C.N., 'The draco standard', in *JRMES,* 2 (1991)

Cosme, P., 'L'image de l'empereur dans les camps romains', in Molin, M. (ed.), *Images et représentations du pouvoir et de l'ordre social dans l'antiquité. Actes du colloque* Angers, 28–29 mai 1999 (Paris 2001), pp. 261–268

Cowan, R., *Imperial Roman Legionary AD 161–284,* WAR 72 (Osprey; Oxford, 2003)

Cowan, R., *Roman Guardsman, 62 BC–AD 324*, WAR 170 (Osprey; Oxford, 2014)

Cuff, D.B., *The Auxilia in Roman Britain and the Two Germanies from Augustus to Caracalla: Family, Religion and 'Romanization'* (Toronto, 2010)

Cumont, F., *Fouilles de Dura Europos 1922–1923* (Paris, 1926)

Cumont, F., 'Le sacrifice du tribun romain Terentius et les Palmyréniens à Doura', in *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot,* Tome 26, Fscicule 1–2 (1923), pp. 1–46

D'Amato, R. & A. Negin, *Roman Decorated Armour* (London, 2017)

D'Amato, R., *Roman Standards & Standard-Bearers (1): 112 BC – AD 192*, ELI 221 (Osprey; Oxford, 2018)

Dahmen, K., *Untersuchungen zu Form und Funktion kleinformatiger Porträts der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Münster, 2001)

Daremberg, C. & E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* (Paris, 1873–1917)

Daut, R., *Imago. Untersuchungen zum Bildbegriff der Römer* (Heidelberg, 1975)

Degen, R., 'Römische Standartenfragmente vom Summus Poeninus', in *Revue suisse d'Art et d'Archéologie* 38, pp. 244–259

Von Domaszewski, A., 'Die Fahnen in römischen Heere' in *Abhd. des Archäologisch- Epigraphischen Seminars der Univ. Wien 5, Vienna 1885 = id. 1979 (Aufsätze zur römischen Heeresgeschichte, Darmstadt)*, pp. 1–80

Von Domaszewski, A., 'Die Religion des römischen Heeres', in *Westdeut. Zeitschr. Gesch. Kunst., 14* (Trier, 1895), pp. 1–128

Dorow, W., *Die Denkmale germanischer und romischer Zeit in den Rheinisch-Westfalischen Provinzen 2, Romische Alterthumer in und um Neuwied am Rhein* (Berlin,1826)

Downey, S. B., 'A Preliminary Corpus of the Standards of Hatra', in *Sumer* 26 (1970), pp. 195–225

Dütschke, H., *Antike Bildwerke in Oberitalien, IV: Turin, Brescia, Verona und Mantua* (Leipzig, 1880)

Egger, R., 'Ikonographisches zur römischen Standarte von Gauting. Neue Aspekte und Perspektiven', in *Dedicatio Festschrift Hermann Dannheimer* (Kallmünz/Opf. 1999) pp.98–115

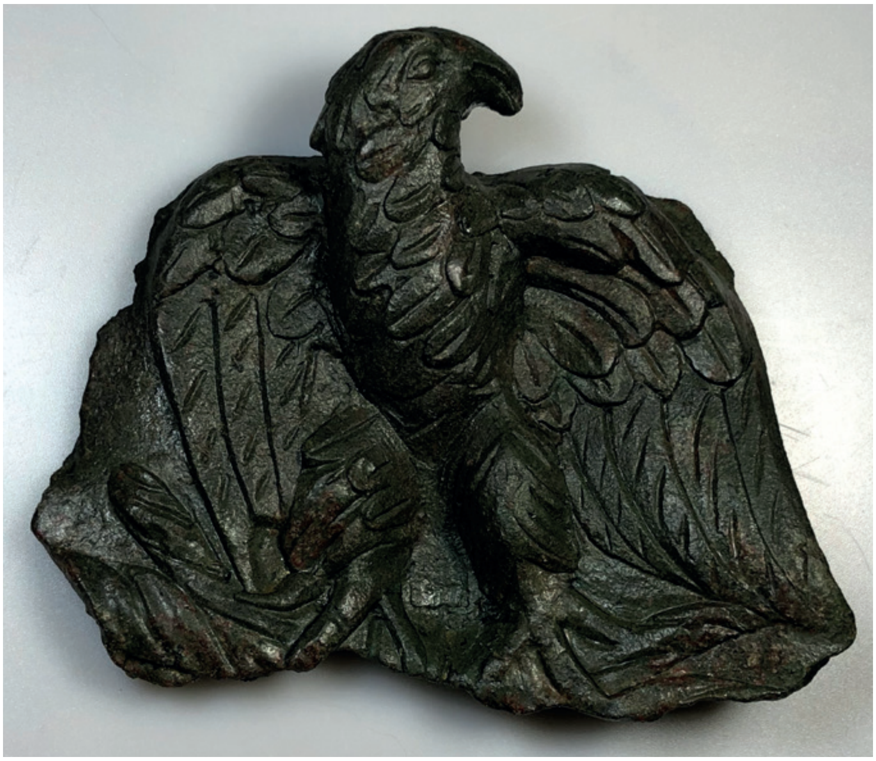
Egger, R., 'Das Labarum, die Kaiserstandarte der Spätantike', in *SBWien* 234, 1 (1960)

Elsner, J., 'Sacrifice and Narrative on the Arch of the Argentarii at Rome', in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 18 (2005), pp. 83-98

Feugère, M., *Les Armes des Romains* (Paris, 1993)

Garbsch, J., *Römische Paraderüstungen. Ausstellungskatalog Nürnberg–München, MünchBeitrVFG 30* (Munich, 1978)

Gigli, L., 'San Marcello al Corso', in *Le Chiese di Roma illustrate* NF 29 (Rome, 1996)



Statuette of eagle, possibly part of a *signum*, early 3rd century AD. (European private collection; photo courtesy Dr Fabrizio Casprini)

Gilliver, C.M., *The Roman Art of War: Theory and Practice, A Study of the Roman Military Writers* (London, 1993)

Giuliano, A., *Arco di Costantino* (Milan, 1955)

Grégoire, H., 'L'étymologie de Labarum', in *Byzantion*, 4, (1929), pp. 477–82

Grosse, R., 'Die Fahnen in der römisch-byzantinischen Armee des 4.–10. Jahrhunderts', in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 24 (1923/24), pp. 359–372

Habel, F.G., 'Ueber die Feldzeichen des römischen Heeres insbesondere die der XXII Legion', in *Annalen des Vereines für Nassauische Alterthumskunde* II, 3 (1837), pp. 98–265

Hatt, J. J., 'La vision de Constantin au sanctuaire de Grand et l'origine celtique du labarum', in *Latomus*, T. 9, Fasc. 4 (Oct–Dec 1950), pp. 427–436

Hebblewhite, M., 'The signa militaria and the imperial imagines as symbols of power: AD 235–395', in *JRMES*, Vol 14/15 (2003/2004), pp.77–88

Helgeland, J., 'Roman Army Religion', in *ANRW*, 2, 16, 2 (1978), pp.1473–1478, 1491–1503

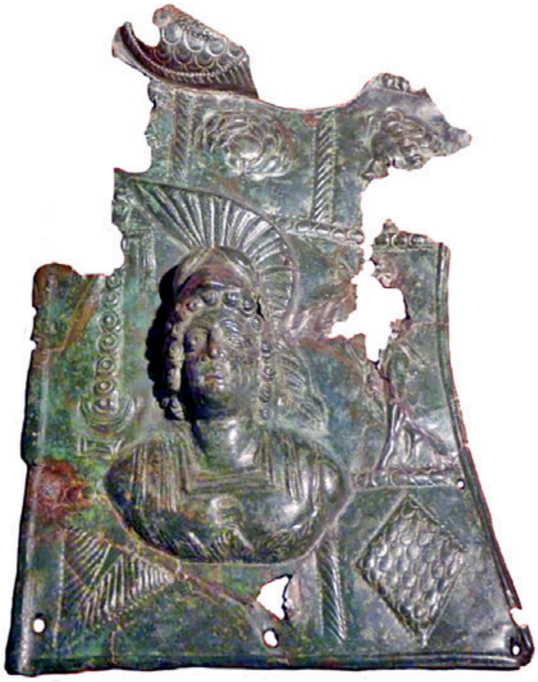
Illiceto, A., *Aspetti di vita quotidiana, religiosa, militare e civile in Britannia e lungo il Vallo Adriano* (Bologna, 2009)

James, S., *The Excavations at Dura–Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters 1928–1937. Final Report VII: Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment* (London, 2004)

Jobst, W. (ed.), *Carnuntum. Das Erbe Roms an der Donau* (Vienna, 1992)

Junkelmann, M., *Die Reiter Roms, Teil I: Reise, Jagd, Triumph und Circusrennen* (Mainz, 1990)

Junkelmann, M., *Teil II: Der militârische Einsatz* (Mainz, 1991)



Fragment of horse chamfron from the Danube, *c*. AD 150–250. Just visible to the left of the embossed war-god is a small representation of a standard, which Töpfer interprets as a legionary centurial *signum*. It is surmounted by a hand above a crosspiece with pendant straps or ribbons at the ends, above nine *phalerae* of *patera* shape, above a large *lunula*. (Former Axel Guttman collection, 595; ex-D'Amato-Negin – see Biblio)

Junkelmann, M., *Teil III: Zubehör, Reitweise, Bewaffnung* (Mainz, 1992)

Junkelmann, M., *Reiter wie Statuen aus Erz.* (Mainz, 1996)

Junkelmann, M., *Romische Helme* (Mainz, 2000)

Kemkes, M., J. Scheuerbrand & N. Willburger, *Der Limes, Grenze Roms zu den Barbaren* (Ostfildern, 2005)

Kovács, P., 'Beneficiarius Lances and Ring-Pommel Swords in Pannonia', in Visy, Z. (ed.), *Limes XIX, Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Pécs, September 2003* (Pécs, 2005) pp. 955–970

Kovács, P., 'Hasta Pura', in *ActaArchHung*, 55 (2004), pp. 81–92

Künzl, E., *Die Alamannenbeute aus dem Rhein bei Neupotz Plünderungsgut aus dem römischen Gallien*, Monogr. RGZM 34 (Mainz. 1993)

Künzl, E., 'Zwei silberne Tetrarcheportrats im RGZM und die Romischen Kaiserbildnisse aus Gold und Silber', in *JRGZM*, 30 (1983), pp. 381–402

Künzl, E., *Unter der goldenen Adlern: Der Waffenschmuck des römischen Imperiums* (Mainz, 2008)

La Baume, P., 'Besonders wertvolle römische Funde in Niedersachsen, Bremen und Hamburg', in *Die Kunde* NF 22 (1971), pp. 129–188

La Baume, P., 'Signumscheibe und Merkurrelief von Niederbieber', in *Bjb*, 177 (1977), pp. 565–568

Lebedynsky, I., *Armes et guerriers barbares, au temps des grandes invasions, IVe au VIe siècle après J.C.* (Paris, 2001)

Lebedynsky, I., *Les sarmates, amazons et lanciers cuirassés entre Oural et Danube, VII siècle av. J.C.–VI siècle apr. J.C.* (Saint Germain du Puy, 2002)

Le Bohec, Y., *L'armée Romaine* (Paris, 1989)

Le Glay, M., 'Reliefs, inscriptions et stèles de Rapidum', in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire,* Tome 63 (1951) pp. 53–91

Léon, R. & L. Renier, 'Notice sur un monument funéraire découvert récemment à Ramleh, près d'Alexandrie', in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 16e année (1872), pp. 208–216

L'Orange, H. P. & A. von Gerkan, 'Der spatantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens', in *Stud. zur spatantike Kunstgeschichte,* 10 (Berlin, 1939)

Matei-Popescu, F., *The Roman Army in Moesia Inferior* (Bucharest, 2010)

Mattern, M., 'Die reliefverzierten römischen Grabstelen der Provinz Britannia', in *KölnJb,* 22 (1989), pp. 707–801

Monaci, A., 'Sulle varie forme delle Aquile Legionarie', in *RendPontAc 5* (1927), pp. 205 ff

Nabbefeld, A., *Römische Schilde, Studien zu Funden und bildlichen Überlieferungen vom Ende der Republik bis in die späte Kaiserzeit* (Rahden, 2008)

Nicolle, D., *Romano–Byzantine Armies, 4th–9th Century*, MAA 247 (Osprey: London, 1992)

Panella, C., *I segni del potere, realtà e immaginario della sovranità nella Roma Imperiale* (Bari, 2011)

Panciera, S., 'Signis Legionum, Insegne,Immagini Imperiali e Centurioni Frumentarii a Peregrinis', in *Mélanges à la memoire de Marcel Le Glay* (Brussels, 1994), pp. 610–623

Renel, C., *Cultes Militaires de Rome, Les enseignes* (Lyon-Paris, 1903)

Reynolds, P.K.B., *The Vigiles of Imperial Rome* (Oxford, 1926)

Ricci, C., 'Una stele inconsueta di soldato da Calcedonia, immagine e testo', in *Sylloge Epigraphica Barcinonensis* (*SEBarc*), XI (2013), pp. 63–71

Roma e i Barbari. La nascita di un nuovo mondo; *Cat. mostra, Venezia, Palazzo Grassi, 26 Jan–20 July 2008* (Milan, 2008)

Robinson, H. Russell, *What the Soldiers Wore on Hadrian's Wall* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1979)

Rostovtzeff, 'Vexillum and victory', in *Journal of Roman Studies,* Vol 32, Parts 1 & 2 (1932), pp. 92–106

Schenk D., *Flavius Vegetius Renatus. Die Quellen der Epitoma Rei Militaris*, Klio Beih. 22 (Leipzig, 1930)

Speidel, M.P., 'Eagle-Bearer and Trumpeter', in *Bjb,* 176, (1976), pp. 124–163

Speidel M. P., 'The Master of the Dragon Standards and the Golden Torc: An Inscription from Prusias and Prudentius' Peristephanon', in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974), Vol. 115 (1985), pp. 283–287

Speidel, M. P., *Riding for Caesar. The Roman Emperors' Horse Guards* (London, 1994)

Srejović, D., *Roman Imperial Towns and Palaces in Serbia. Ausstellungskatalog Belgrad, Galerija Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti 73* (Belgrade, 1993)

Szirmai, K., 'Military Equipment Depicted in Aquincum after the Marcomannic Wars', in Giumlia-Mair, A. (ed.), *I bronzi antichi. Produzione e tecnologia, Atti del XV Congresso Internazionale sui Bronzi antichi*, *Grado-Aquileia 22–26 maggio 2001* (Montagnac, 2002), pp. 600–608

Töpfer, K. M., 'Der Adler der Legion', in *Antiker Welt*, 5/2008, pp. 30–36

Töpfer, K. M., *Signa Militaria, Die römischen Feldzeichen in der Republik und im Prinzipat* (Mainz, 2011)

Woods, D., 'Two Notes on Late Roman Military Equipment', in *JRMES, 9* (1998), pp. 31–35

INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** refer to illustrations and their captions

Abryttus, battle of **B3(10–11)**
Alemanni, Caracalla's campaign against 10
Alexander 22
Alexander Severus, Emperor 48
Alexandrus **A3(6–7)**
altars, dedication of 4–5, **A2(6–7)**
Ammianus Marcellinus 6, 24, 25, 28, 45, 49, 56, 56–57
Anian, St 8–9
animal iconography 31–32, **F1(40–41)**
aquila (eagle) 8–10, **9**, **10**, 12, **22**, **38**, **39**, **F2(40–41)**, 44, **51**, **H1(54–55)**, **61**
aquiliferi. **A2(6–7)**, **B1(10–11)**, 8, 9, 24, **F2(40–41)**, **G3(46–47)**, **48**, 50, **51**, 53
Arcadius, Emperor 8
Arch of Constantine 15, 16, 24, 26, 27, **28**, **D3(28–29)**, **31**, 34, **E(34–35)**, **39**, 43–44, 50, 52, 53
Arch of Galerius **15**, 24, 26, 27, **27**, **D1(28–29)**, **33**, 36, 52, 53, **H4(54–55)**, **H8(54–55)**
Arch of Septimius Severus **5**, 26, 28
Arch of the Argentarii 42
armour **A1(6–7)**, **B1(10–11)**, **B3(10–11)**, **15**, **D(28–29)**, **32**, **33**, **39**, **F2–3(40-41)**, **G3(46–47)**, 51, **51**, **52**, 53
Aurelius (Firmanus?) 9, 10
Aurelius Andronicus, L. 22–23
Aurelius Cupitus 50
Aurelius Diogenes **B2(10–11)**, 12, **13**
auxiliary standards 28, 30–31
Aventine Hill 6, 18, **38**, 53

banda 28
barbaricarii 22
belts **A3(6–7)**
beneficiarii insignia 36–37
Bourges spear 19–20
Britannia **B2(10–11)**, **G1(46–47)**
buccellarii **G2(46–47)**
Byzantine Empire, fall 0f 42

carrying-sling **A2(6–7)**, **8**, 9, **9**
cataphractarii 32
cavalry 26, **26**, **28**, 32, **E3(34–35)**, **F3(40–41)**, 44–45, 50, 51–52
chalcedony spheres 37
chapel of the standards, the 54, 56
Chester 12, **13**
Christian monogram, the 5, 6, 14, 15, 25, **37**, 39, 40, 42, 44–45
Christian motifs 4, 15, 16
Christianity, adoption of 5
civic *collegia* 37
clibanarii 32
cohors equitata 32
Cohors VII Raetorum (Equitata) 30
Cohors XX Palmyrenorum 30
cohort and century standards 22–25, 46, **H6(54–55)**, **58**
cohortes peditatae 30
coins 18, 25, 37, **37**, 40, 42, 44
Column of Arcadius 44–45
Constantine the Great 4, 5, 15, 16, **28**, **E(34–35)**, **37**, 38–40, 43–44
Constantius II, Emperor 27, 39, 45
corona muralis **A1(6–7)**, **22**, 42
Crispus, Emperor 39, 40
cult of the standards 4–6

Dacians 25, 26
Didius Julianus, Emperor 42
Diocletian, Emperor 24, **D(28–29)**
Domestici Protectores Sacri Divini Lateris **F3(40–41)**
draconarii **B3(10–11)**, **23**, 26, **D1(28–29)**, 46, **G1(46–47)**, 48, 49, 51, 52–53
dracones 5, **B3(10–11)**, 24, **24**, 25–27, **25**, **26**, **27**, **28**, **30**, 32, 45, 46, **G1(46–47)**, **H4–5(54-55)**, 56
Dura Europos **14**, 30

eagle **A1(6–7)**
Egypt 10, 12, 14, **14**, **D3(28–29)**
Eques singularis **B3(10–11)**, **C(20–21)**
Equites Dalmatae Passerentiaci **E3(34–35)**
Eusebius of Caesarea 5, 16, 38–39, 39–40

flamoularios **57**
flamoulon 27–28

Galli Victores **F1(40–41)**
Gallienus, Emperor 8, 12, **13**, **C(20–21)**
Gaul 19, 22
Goths 18
Gregorius of Nazianzius, St 26–27, 40, 45

Hadrian, Emperor 26
hastae auratae 8
helmets **B3(10–11)**, **15**, **23**, **27**, **D(28–29)**, **32**, **33**, **E3(34–35)**, **39**, **F(40–41)**, **G(46–47)**, 51, 51–53
Herodian 42, 54
Historiae Augustae 8, **C(20–21)**, 25, 33, 46
Honorius, Emperor 8, 18, 42
Hostilianus, Emperor **23**
Hunnic mercenaries **G2(46–47)**

imagines 13, 40, 42, 43, 44, 48
imaginiferi **B2(10–11)**, 12, **17**, **E2(34–35)**, 49, 50
imago **B2(10–11)**, 12–13, **13**, **17**, **C(20–21)**
Imperial Guard standards **F3(40–41)**, 42–45, **42**, **H2–3(54–55)**
imperial sceptre 34, 37, **44**, **45**
imperial standard-bearer **D3(28–29)**
insignia triumphi **32**, **33**, 36, **52**, **H8(54–55)**
iubae 34, 36

Julian 'the Apostate', Emperor 6, **H7(54–55)**

labarum 15–17, 24, 25, **E1(34–35)**, 38, **G2(46–47)**,
  decoration 16
  imperial 37, 38–40, 42, 44, **H7(54–55)**
  staff 15, 18
Legio II Adiutrix **A2(6–7)**, **8**, 9–10
Legio II Augusta **G1(46–47)**
Legio II Parthica Gordiana Pia Fidelis Aeterna **H1(54–55)**, 56
Legio IIII Flavia **19**, 22
Legio IIII Italica **B1(10–11)**
Legio VII Claudia 22–23
Legio XI Apollinaris **E2(34–35)**
Legio XIII Gemina **G3(46–47)**
Legio XV Apollinaris **31**
Legio XX Valeria Victrix **B2(10–11)**
Legio Herculiani **D1(28–29)**
Lepontius 31–32, **F1(40–41)**
Licinius Cameo, the 36, 44
limitanei standards 31–32
Ludovisi Sarcophagus **B3(10–11)**, 23, **23**, **24**, 32, **32**, **38**, **52**, 53, 56
lunula **4**, **19**, 22–25, **22**, 42, **62**

Maxentius, Emperor 37, 39, 43
Maximinus, Emperor **B1(10–11)**
Milvian Bridge, battle of **31**, 38, 44
musicians **52**, 56

Niederbieber 6, **B3(10-11)**, **24**, **25**, **26**, 27, 28, **H4(54-55)**
Notitia Dignitatum 10, 12, 18, 22, **G1(46–47)**, **G3(46–47)**

parade **C(20–21)**
Parthian Wars 26
Parthians 10, 25, 28
phalerae **A3(6–7)**, **4**, 15, **19**, 22–23, **22**, 25, 30–31, **38**, **39**, 40, 43, 44, **52**, **62**
Praetorian Guard **A1(6–7)**, **B3(10–11)**, **C(20–21)**, **D2(28–29)**, **38**, **39**, 42–44, **H2–3(54-55)**
principales 36, 50
protomes 19, 20
Prudentius 17, 49, 49–50
psychological importance 5–6

rank hierarchy 45–46, 48, 50
Rome 15, 18

sacred status 4, 5
Sammnus **16**, **17**
Sarmatians 25, 26
Septimius Severus **5**, 12, 49, 54
Shapur II, King of Persia 27–28
shields **A2(6–7)**, **D1(28–29)**, **E3(34–35)**, **F3(40–41)**, **G1(46–47)**, **G3(46–47)**, **48**, 51, 53
signa centuriarum 22–25, **58**, **62**
signa cohortis **A3(6–7)**, **C(20–21)**, 24, **38**
signa imperii 37–45
  Hasta Summa Imperii 38
  Imperial Guard **F3(40–41)**, 42–45, **42**
  labarum 37, 38–40, 42, 44, **H7(54–55)**
  vexillum 37, **37**, **F3(40–41)**
signa templorum 33–34
signals 36, 56
signiferi **A1(6–7)**, **A3(6–7)**, **19**, **D2(28–29)**, **32**, 34, **E1(34–35)**, **39**, **F1(40–41)**, 53
signum 8, **22**, **61**
  centurial 22–25, **58**, **62**
  cohort **A3(6–7)**, **C(20–21)**, 24, **38**
  Praetorian Guard **A1(6–7)**, **H2–3(54-55)**
simulacra **D2(28–29)**, **30**, **31**, 33–34, 34, **E2(34–35)**, **39**, 44
skeptrà 8, 34
sources 6, 8
Sozomenos 17, 34
spearheads **16**, **17**, 18, 18–20, **18**, 22, 31, 36–37, 37–38, **38**, **43**, **44**, **45**, 53–54
  inscriptions 19–20, 20, 22
staffs 9, 15, 18, **19**, **22**, 31, **E(34–35)**, **38**, 39, **39**, 43
  dracones 26
  handles **22**, **37**
standard bearers
  appointment 49–50
  decorations 49
  dress **A2–3(6–7)**, **13**, **E1(34–35)**, 50
  duties 49
  promotion 50
  ranks 45–46, 48, 50
  senior 48
  Urban cohorts 49
Stilicho 34

tactical employment 4, 56–57
Terentius painting **14**, 30–31
Tetrarchy, the **D(28–29)**
tibiales **B2(10–11)**
Titus Flavius Surillio **A2(6–7)**, **8**, 9, **9**, 10
Töpfer, Dr K. M. 8, 9

Valens, Emperor 42
Valentinian I, Emperor 42
Vegetius, Flavius Renatus 8, 12, 23–24, 27–28, 32, 36, **F2(40–41)**, 45–46, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56
Vergilius Romanus **G1(46–47)**
vexillarii **5**, **15**, 32, **E3(34–35)**, **F3(40–41)**, **G2(46–47)**, 52
vexillum **5**, **A1(6–7)**, 8, 13–14, **14**, **15**, 16, **19**, **C(20–21)**, 24, 25, 26, **D3(28–29)**, **38**, **43**
  auxiliary units 30–31
  buccellarii **G2(46–47)**
  cavalry 32, **E3(34–35)**, **F3(40–41)**
  decoration 14, **15**, 16
  dimensions 14, **15**
  fringes 13–14, **15**
  imperial 37, **37**, **F3(40–41)**
  Imperial *imagines* 13
  Praetorian Guard 42
  spearheads **16**, **18**
  staff 18, **19**, **22**, **37**

weapons **A3(6–7)**, 18, **F3(40–41)**, **G2–3(46–47)**, 53–54
Winged Victory 8, 30, **30**, **31**, 34, 37, **39**, 44

OSPREY PUBLISHING
Bloomsbury Publishing plc
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
1385 Broadway, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd
First published in Great Britain in 2019

© Osprey Publishing Ltd 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB 9781472836496; eBook 9781472836502; ePDF 9781472836489; XML 9781472836519

Editor: Martin Windrow
Index by Alan Rutter
Typeset by PDQ Digital Media Solutions, Bungay, UK

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

To find out more about our authors and books, visit **www.ospreypublishing.com**. Here you will find extracts, author interviews, details of forthcoming events, and the option to sign up for our newsletter.

DEDICATION

To the standard-bearers of modern armies, in the hope that they may remember the ancient origins of the emblems they carry, and feel pride in their honourable responsibility

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must once again record my special thanks to Dr Karl Töpfer, the world's leading authority in this field, for providing me with a copy of his monumental work, which was of crucial help in the realization of this project. Dr Marco Ricci also deserves a lion's share of my thanks, for generously sharing with me the results of the interesting discoveries from the Palatine and Aventine hills in Rome; his first-hand documentation, pictures and graphic reconstructions reveal to Osprey readers unique fragments of Late Roman weapons and standards.

As always, warm thanks are owed to my dear friend Dr Marina Mattei, curator of the Capitolini Musei, Rome, for her hospitality and for help in finding photographic material in the museums of Palazzo Altemps and Palazzo Mattei. For the latter, thanks are also due to Dr Rita Paris, former director of the Museum. Photographs generously furnished by Dr Fabrizio Casprini opened a shrine of previously unseen artefacts. At the same time I must thank my dear friend Marco Saliola for similarly zealous help.

For travel and assistance in Turkey I must record my gratitude to all my colleagues there, especially Prof Metin Gökçay and Dr Feza Demirkok of the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul, for their inestimable help at Turkish sites and museums and in obtaining photographic permissions. Similarly, I owe special thanks for assistance at sites and museums in Serbia to the Director of the National Museum in Zaječar, Bora Dimitrijević, for the finds from the Felix Romuliana palace at Gamzigrad, and to Dr Jasmina Davidovic of the Museum of Sremska Mitrovica.

For photographic assistance I must once again thank Dr Manfred Beer, whose precious photographic archive is always of invaluable help. I also record my gratitude to the following museums and institutions: the Civico Museo del Mare, Trieste; the Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo and Palazzo Altemps, Rome; the Musée Archéologique de la Fourvière, Lyon; Chester Archaeological Museum; Koblenz Museum; the Museum Carnuntinum, at Bad-Deutsch Altenburg; the Aquincum Museum, Budapest; the National Museum in Zaječar, and the Museum of Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia; the Argos Archaeological Museum in Greece; the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; and the Numismatica Ars Classical, Zurich. I would further like to thank the Ephesus Archaeological Museum, the Gaziantep Glass Museum and the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, in Turkey; my dear friend Dr Ashraf Nageh, for allowing access to the collection of the Coptic Museum, Cairo; and last but not least, to three private European collections.

I am, as so often, especially grateful for the patient contributions of Dr Robert Vermaat, Dr Eng, Dr Andrea Salimbeti, Dr Andrea Babuin of Jannina University, and Dr Massimo Bizzarri, in locating sources and material and in preparing illustrations, among other assistance. I also owe some of the page illustrations in this book to Dr Andrey Negin, in addition to his major work on the splendid colour plates, which bring the standard-bearers of the Late Roman armies to glowing life.